

Notes taken by our
Repatriated Sisters,

Sister Mary Joanne and Sister Jerome Marie

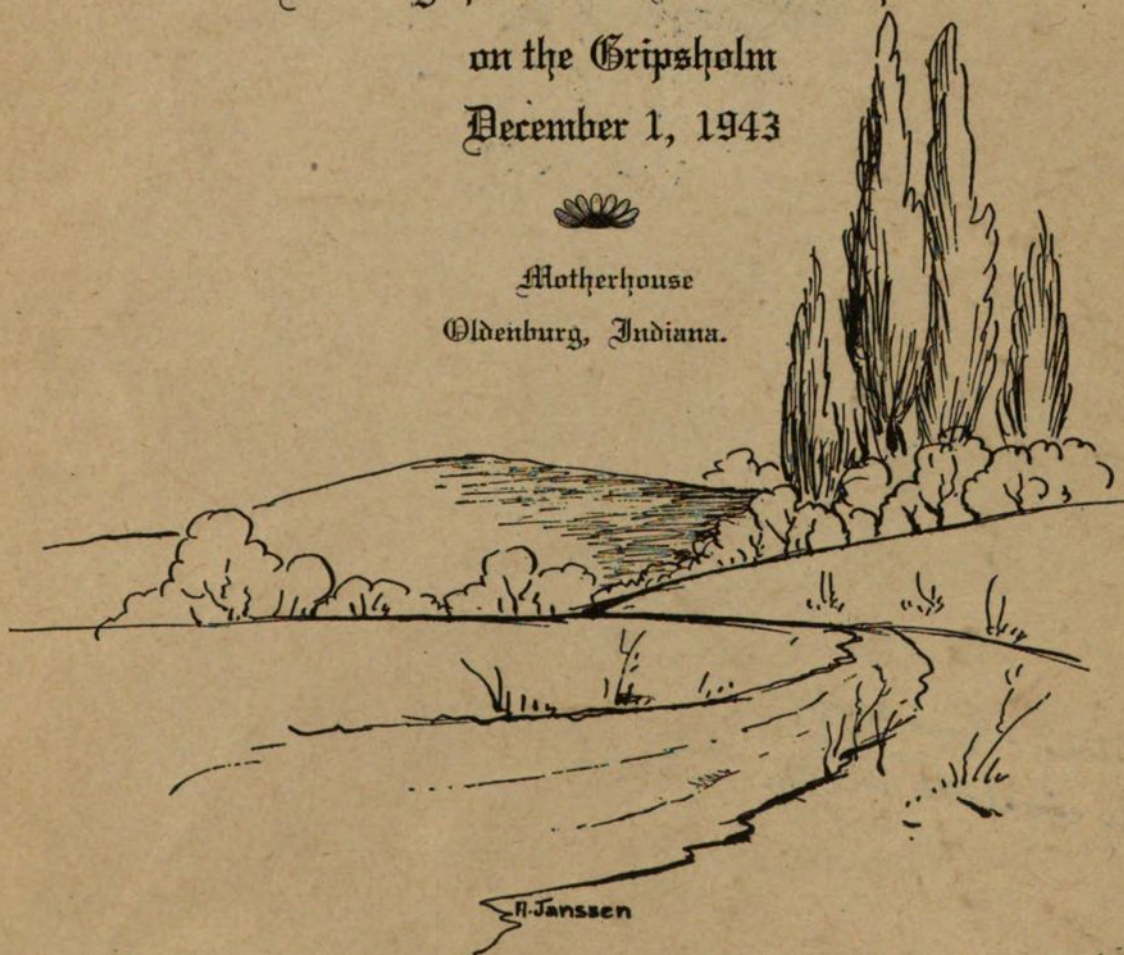
Arriving home from War torn China

on the Gripsholm

December 1, 1943



Motherhouse
Oldenburg, Indiana.



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LOVINGLY

I dedicate this Book to
My Dear Father
for whose ceaseless prayers in my behalf
I am forever grateful.

Sister Mary Joanne

*With compliments of
Rev. Mother M. Leonida
O.S.F.*



Sister Virgila Marie, Sister Agnetta, Sister Pauline, Sister Joanne.



Sister Jerome Marie, Sister M. Virginette

Sister Agnetta, Sister Pauline, Sister Virginette, Sister Virgila Marie.
These four Sisters remain in China.

OUR MISSION IN CHINA

Hwangshihkang, Hupeh Province, Wuchang Vicariate
and

WORLD WAR II

SECTION I.

On November 25, 1941, the American gunboat went down river. For the first time it made no stop and blew no whistles. We knew something was wrong. All communications were cut off and we were left in the dark.

It was December 8, 1941, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, when great events took place. This being one of the very special feasts of China, Christians came to attend Mass from afar off in spite of the drizzling rain. Our Lady's altar was very beautifully decorated. We even became extravagant with candles. Heaps of them surrounded the beautiful statue. The church was packed. Many of the Chinese left their homes as early as 4:00 A. M. to be on time for the wonderful occasion, a celebration of this feast. Between Masses the Japanese authorities called on Father Cornelius. He very quickly dismissed them because he was quite busy hearing confessions. They seemed provoked but finally went away.

The drizzling rain turned into a cold, steady downpour preventing many of the Christians from leaving the Compound to return home. We were always prepared for guests so it was not difficult to put them up for the night. About 2:00 P. M. Wu-su-fu came rushing over to our convent and told us Father was held prisoner, in his house, by the Japanese, who declared they were at war with America. It was useless to argue. We had no news and were not certain whether it was the truth or not. At any rate, Father could not leave his house and we were to assemble all the people who were then on the Compound in the school house.

What an exciting day! Our Compound was completely surrounded by soldiers. No one was permitted to come in and none could leave the place. The people were all unnerved. Our babies clung to our skirts not knowing what was wrong but sensing trouble. Sister Agnetta turned pale, the cold weather adding to her palor. She could not control the tears as she realized the situation of the affair.

After holding Father for two hours, the Japanese came to cross-examine us and give the place the once-over. About forty soldiers in all looked into every nook and corner. Many of the babies screamed when they saw so great a number of men. The officers were kind, however, and told me to take the babies into the room and tell them not to cry or be afraid. They also told Sister Agnetta to remain there but the rest of us would have to take them through our house. Father explained that men were not permitted to go in our house but that we would consent to the General (Day Chang) and his interpreter only. They agreed and the rest of his escort remained in the basement. Finding no radio or other outside connections with the world they departed satisfied.

During the inspection tour Father had an opportunity to whisper to us the intentions of the Japanese to take him away with them to Shih-hui-yao. He begged us to follow to his house and not leave him for one minute; also to

use our influence to keep him at Hwangshikang. They tried their very best to get rid of us but we ignored them and followed even though they showed their displeasure. After their many impertinent remarks we finally succeeded in having them consent to let Father remain until the following day when all the church services would be finished. They would come bright and early next morning. You may be sure we prayed and begged the Blessed Mother to prevent Father's leaving. Our dear Mother heard the prayers of her children for on the next day the body of officers did not appear.

Our next move was to get the boarders to their homes. The necessary permission was obtained, and before we knew it our place looked like a load-station of baywoes, clothes and furniture.

After the boarders left for their respective homes we learned we too were to be shipped to Africa so one more difficulty stared us in the face. Our babies had to be placed before we would leave. Busy moments followed. Clothes had to be packed for each one so as not to impose upon the Chinese people too much. The people stormed the place for our little darlings but all had to promise to return them if things changed and we would not have to leave. Luckily we did not have to go even though we all had the few duds packed in a pillow slip since we were not permitted to take suitcases. We planned on wearing three habits apiece so as not to leave so much behind. Oh, what anxious moments! One day we were going. The next, we were not. This state of affairs continued for weeks. Every day we had to appear before the guards who wanted to make certain the foreigners had not escaped.

On the 10th of December, 1941, the Japanese came to seal our gates and rub the American flag off the walls. We were told if any seal was broken it meant severe punishment. The Chinese put protectors over the seals for they were only paper and could easily be washed off by the rain. We were ordered to close our Church so that meant no services that Sunday. The Day dsang from Shih-hui-yao visited Father. After explaining to him the necessity of having the Christians hear Mass he gave permission for them to come.

Christmas was somewhat sad that year. The spirit was lacking. The entire time was spent in anxiety. We were always being notified to go and then not to go until we hardly knew where we were.

We opened school again and had our enrollment of one hundred children. One day the Japs had 40 coolies enter the Compound and take all the school desks; the children had to attend their school. Our teacher was threatened to be shot if he dared teach. To open their school they wanted uniforms for the children so they came in after our sewing machine to make them. After three weeks persistence we got back the machine but not in quite the same condition.

They had the nerve to want to drink wine with Father to celebrate our losses.

Nineteen-forty-two was a hard year for we never knew what to expect. We had no oil to use the water pump so the Fathers carried the water. Late at night when the sun was down they were still hoisting the water onto the roof.

One almost grows bold with these people. Holy Saturday, April 5, while Father Cornelius was praying the Prophecies two Japs came to the church door. They kicked the pan that had the Easter fire in it and we knew they were peeved. I was sent after them to see what they wanted. It was still very dark. I could not see when of a sudden a shot rang out. My knees almost collapsed under me when another shot was fired. I heard the cry of "Lassie," our police dog, and I knew they killed her. Rolf, a German dog, came sneaking close to me. Once more I started in the direction of the shots when the Holy Spirit must have enlightened me to put this dog away first. I feared these men would harm the big girls so I ran to the Baby House. They were

already pushing hard and heavy on a bolted door. The bolt was about thirty inches long but these two men bent it and opened the door. They said they were looking for a man who came over the fence at 3:00 A. M. I offered to go with them to find the man. When we got to the dispensary they wanted to go in there. Since I had no key they took the butt end of their guns and broke down the door. The one remained with me but the other got away by breaking down another door. By this time Sister Virgila Marie and Sister Pauline came. I sent them after the fellow who got away but they were too late. He killed another dog, one of Lassie's pups.

Poor Father was at the altar hearing the shots and thinking we were getting killed. He sent Wusufu to call Father Leon who was by this time awakened by the third shot. To reason with the men was impossible and since the dogs were dead there was nothing we could do about it. Once more they had to look in church. When Father heard the click of their shoes on the cement he said he made an act of contrition because he thought surely they were going to shoot him. He turned completely around at the altar and saw us with the men and then only was he relieved. He called Sister Agnetta up to the altar to tell him what had happened. That same day we got our big girls out into the country. We feared the men would come over the wall at night since they knew Lassie was gone.

Providence was always with us. That same day the General from Shih-hui-yao came to see Father. When he heard what had happened he punished these men and they were taken away from H. S. K. For a long time we had a rest with the exception of roll call. On the second of July, 1942, we sighted American airplanes flying over us. What could it mean?

We were unable to get funds and our food was running low. Once more we talked about putting the children out in families but this time we decided to adopt them out. September 8, 1942, the General from Jojang came telling us that on the 15th we would leave for Africa. We immediately disposed of all the children. Not only because we had no food for them but also because we thought surely we would go this time. Nothing happened on the appointed days so we settled down to stay once more. Our servants were to be dismissed. We had no money to pay them. Before they went they were sent to Lahutoe to cut down trees for firewood. We had all these trees cut and stacked when we left Hwang-Shih-Kang—three truck loads heaped up. This went to the Japs.

We no longer had much to eat so Yala and Martha went out to collect from the parishioners. Every day for a week they walked miles, always bringing something home. One of the last days of their collecting they were told the Japs were coming the next week to take the foreigners away. They were all excited when they related the story. I sent them to Father Cornelius, but he said he put no stock in it. We thought it was just another scare.

When our funds ran low the Fathers took to gardening. We worked in the fields also. Our crop of Chinese cabbage was ready for the market. In China the whole plot is sold for a price and the purchaser comes in to do his own cutting. We were elated over the results. November 3rd the buyer cleared out one-half of the plot and intended to return for the other half November 5th. He never had the good fortune of getting the rest of the cabbage for on Wednesday, November 4th, while we were digging in the yard we heard the motor of an automobile. Father Cornelius said his back was about to break but he would rather dig than entertain the Japs. They usually expected him to play the piano for about two hours. Old Beh Hudzu, the gateman, looked excited when he came for Father. Before long they sent for Father Leon. He had been gone only a few minutes when he came running all out of breath. He told me to drop everything and get the Sisters together to tell them the Compound was surrounded by Japanese and we were to leave H. S. K. on Friday, the 6th. He said to pack whatever we could for they

offered to take trunks along. He also mentioned the six Sisters of Charity from San-chiang-kow would sleep at our convent the night of the 5th and we were to get beds ready for them. While he was yet telling me the Japs were coming toward us so I rushed off to break the sad news. The Sisters thought I was joking. They were convinced when I pointed out the back window to the many blades of bayonets, the only thing we could see of the soldiers. In my heart I was ready. So many times I rebelled against the idea of leaving until one day I begged God to grant me the grace to be submissive to His Will. Every day I would pray not to stay, not to go away, but to be ready to do God's will when the time presented itself. This was the time and I can really say I had peace in my soul. It was a busy day that followed. We arranged to take the four blind girls, the two old popos, two small babies, and Dellissa and Yala with us. This meant some more packing since the Japs agreed upon trunks. It was a hectic day, too. Everywhere we went we met a Jap carrying a gun and bayonet. They were snooping in every corner. All doors were open to them and they pulled things out as they pleased. Our own packing was quite ready since we were always preparing to go. For two years we practically lived in our suitcases so they did not have to be packed. We had dishes though that had to be put in the cubby hole, a secret hiding place on the second floor which I am sure the Japs found without much trouble after our departure. They got quite a few treasures if they did find it. All our dishes, silver, wash boilers, lamps, pots and pans, thermos bottles—big and little—everything imaginable were hidden there. We did the best we could. They had to look for things if they wanted them.

That afternoon it began to rain: a cold, drizzling rain. All night it rained but that did not prevent the guards from walking back and forth performing their duty. A watchful eye was kept on us and we thought how stupid they were to even think we would attempt running away on such a night. No one slept that night. Not that we were afraid but just that sleep refused to come. Thursday morning the rain continued to pour. It continued that whole day. Father decided to kill at least one pig since the Japs would take them anyway. We waited until the "big man" left the Compound and promised the Japs who were left to guard us, a share of the pig. They were happy. I don't suppose they saw much meat while stationed along the Yangtze and they gave the permission to butcher. Sister Agnetta had two cans of sauer kraut she had been saving. We decided to have this with good pork as a treat for the Sisters of Charity.

It was about 4:30 when the Sisters arrived. Our hearts ached seeing them. They were drenched to the skin. The blankets they were carrying were wet through and through. For a few seconds everyone was on the verge of tears. All of a sudden the bright side came forth when Father Bernardine showed his dripping wet whiskers. We had not recognized him before this and when we saw who he was and how he looked we roared. That ended all soberness. The Japanese were amused at our sense of humor. They joined in the laughter even though they did not know why they were laughing. They could not understand why we could take everything so cheerfully.

The Sisters of Charity had with them a boy of ten years, Danny. He was not responsible for all he did. He was very nervous. When he saw us he was so frightened he screamed. He usually did this every time he would see a Jap. They had threatened to throw him overboard on the way to our place. Father George and Father Odilon were there also.

We received the Sisters into our home and gave them supper. They had much to relate. While at dinner on Wednesday the Japs came and told them they were leaving in two hours. All their orphans (boys) had to be provided for. The Blessed Sacrament had to be consumed. This they did first. The Japs escorted them to the church and watched this solemn ceremony. Their dinner remained uneaten but they managed to bring a little food along. This

was lucky for them for they would have had to go to bed hungry. There was time to pack only a suitcase. Sister Roberta thought she would leave in a new habit. She took off the old one and put it on her bed. In her excitement she left the new one lying on the bed and dressed herself in the old one again. She did not notice the mistake until she was on the boat.

When they got on the boat it was raining. They were to go to Ocheng. It was dark when they reached the place. Their boat did not pull to the shore but the Sisters had to climb over about eight junks on narrow planks. That they did not tumble into the water is a mystery. The soldiers wanted them to hurry. They called them old popos. Sister Roberta told one young soldier to let her grab his arm and he should help her. To her surprise he did so.

They were taken to the barracks. There were no beds or cots just the plain wooden floor on a platform. At least they gave them blankets for the night. The Sisters told how embarrassing it was when they wanted to go to the lavatory. Two guards escorted them with gun and bayonet. Every half-hour a guard would come to the window and throw a flashlight on them to see if they tried to escape. They remained at the barracks until the next day about noon when Father George entered. He had the shock of his lifetime when he saw them. There was much further experience they could have told but the clock pointed to bedtime. Sister Concepta was ill. She needed rest. They all did for that matter, so we gave them their beds.

Next morning some of us got up about 3:00 a.m. It was First Friday, November 6th, and the day appointed for us to leave. The Japs weren't certain if we would go that day or Saturday. We figured on Saturday and were fooled. We fulfilled our religious duties. All five Fathers celebrated Holy Mass. The Sacred Species were consumed and we were ready for our journey.

We were hardly seated at the breakfast table when the Japs came for trunks and inspection. The breakfast remained on the table while we scrambled to all corners. One Jap told me to go upstairs and show the coolies which trunks to take. I did as I was ordered. Had I not been there they would have left six trunks behind. Sister Virgila Marie wrapped up a bundle with wash basins inside. Over the bannister she threw them. She frightened the Jap to death besides breaking the granite off the basins when they crashed to the cement floor below. You will never have any idea of the "rushing out" we had to do on that morning. It was hurry, hurry, run, run; we must not be late for the boat.

Sister Virgila Marie had to use her typewriter to sign our papers. In the paper she had to type "The place of captivity, Hwangshihkang." After she was finished, they took her typewriter with them. Sister Agnetta had a nice clean caputz pinned up intending to pin it in the black veil. There was not time for that. The clean one she crushed and put into her pocket. The soiled one she wore. It was pitiful to see her when she handed the keys over to the Jap. Her chin quivered, her eyes were swimming in tears.

Just as I was about to pass through the gate on to the street, one Jap noticed the bulging pocket of my mantle. "Grab her," he shouted, "She has money in her pocket." After carefully examining all the prayerbooks I had stuffed into this pocket, he was sadly disappointed to find no money. He let me keep my books.

Outside the compound two trucks were loaded with our trunks. The Fathers were going on these trucks to Shih-wei-yao and we would be taken by boat. Rolf, our dog, was on Father's porch. He sensed something was wrong. He did not bark but cried and whined as we left him behind. We had to walk through the streets of H.S.K. to get to the boat. The people of the town cried and begged us to hurry back. Some knelt in the muddy street and asked for a blessing. The Japs were losing face and those marching behind realized it. The people remarked about our kindness in taking the blind girls and the popos with us.

Yangtze River Aboard the Hinky Dinky

All this time we did not know if we were headed down river to Shanghai or up river to Wuchang. Our little boat passed a big river boat on the way to Shih-hui-yao. Then we heard the Japs whisper we missed the boat. We knew then we were going to Wuchang. (Living in suspense is terrible. We lived that way for one whole year. Each new day seemed filled with it.) There was nothing left to do but put us on the "Hinky Dinky" that goes to Hankow. How we dreaded it! That meant we would have to sleep on that boat and there were no accommodations whatsoever. We had some food with us. But why worry, the Lord always provides. On our way to Wuchang we passed our Compound at H.S.K. There were three trucks outside taking the furniture, wood and cattle. That day they took whatever they could.

About 3:00 p.m. we docked at Ocheng. We had a Japanese guard with us. He ordered all the Chinese off the boat for the night. It was reserved for the foreign prisoners. Our Chinese with us were permitted to remain on board. About 5:00 that evening the Japanese guard brought us vegetables and meat to be cooked. He ordered the boatman to give us permission to use his stove. Sister Pauline was cook while the rest of us prepared the vegetables. Fifteen of us were placed in a very small room. No one else dared enter. In this room we were to eat, sleep and do whatever else we wanted to do. When the supper was cooked we served the Fathers first. Then we sat at the table using their dishes and enjoyed our supper as best we could.

Night time came and with it sleeping difficulties. Sister Concepta was very ill. We made her as comfortable as we could on the bench. The rest of us sat up. We could not sleep. Sister Beata did slumber a bit and began to snore. That set us all a-giggling. The Fathers threw themselves on the floor downstairs beside the baggage. Yala and Delissa were downstairs with the children. I heard the small baby cry and went down to care for it as well as I could. I took it upstairs and walked back and forth on the deck with it in my arms. Sister Hildegard, S.C., was also ill. She came out on deck. Sister Virgila Marie followed her to see if she could relieve her. We had a Jap guard on the wharf who walked back and forth. He must have notified the military guard who was taking us to Hankow. He seemed to think we were planning to escape. When we told him why we were on deck he offered his bed to Sister Hildegard. There was enough space for two so we put Sister Pauline in with her.

The next morning could not come quickly enough. The river was covered with a heavy fog. The boat was crowded with passengers all hoping the fog would soon lift. These people became interested in our children. They bought candy and cakes for them. When the fog did not lift the boatmen refused to go. They feared shipwreck if they bumped into one of the islands in the river. The Jap guard again ordered all the Chinese off the boat. That meant another night had to be spent without sleep. We were dead tired just from excitement.

That day the Jap furnished the food. When night time came we arranged to have all the short Sisters sleep on the benches against the wall. The tall ones were to occupy the middle of the floor. Five slept on the benches and five of us on the floor. We did doze a little. About 2:30 a.m. Sister Pauline rolled off the bench. She fell on top of Sister Virgila Marie. That ended sleep for me. I was afraid of rats. I felt certain they crawled over me. I got up and went down to the children. Surely, my Guardian Angel directed me. Little Virgila Marie was in her agony. Poor little thing. She had a hard time before breathing her last. She died about 3:00 a.m. Sunday, November 8th. We wanted to bury her in the river but the Japanese guard said dead or alive he must have so many prisoners when he gets to Hankow. He, therefore, re-

fused our request. The boatman begged us to hide the death of the child. He said the Chinese would not patronize the boat if they knew the baby died because they feared the evil spirit. I did what I could, wrapped the baby in a blanket, took her upstairs to the room we occupied, then put her down under the benches. We sat over her that day. Sunday morning was as foggy as the day before. The owner of the boat refused to leave. About nine o'clock a long distance came from Hankow Japanese Headquarters saying we would have to report in Hankow that night, fog or no fog. We went on our way. The people stormed on the boat at Ocheng but no other stops were made because we were on the boat. Our baby was missed immediately. I told them I took her upstairs where we could give her better care. We got to Hankow about 4:00 p.m. Not a single Chinese had to get off the boat for inspection, an ordeal which usually lasts two hours and takes place just outside of Hankow. When we left the boat, all eyes were on me to see about the baby. They are very keen people. I wrapped her up as if she were asleep and carried her off the boat. None were the wiser. When we got upon the shore those who could not walk were given rickshas. Sister Roberta took the baby from me. The coolie asked her if the baby were asleep and she said "yes." He pulled her to the Canosian Sisters Hospital, took the baby from her while she got out of the ricksha and complimented the baby for its good behavior. Had he known it was a dead baby, Sister Roberta would never have had the good fortune to get a ricksha that night. The Italian Sisters buried her and I saw no more of baby Virgila Marie.

Hankow

We were now in Hankow. The Fathers were sent to Father Adolph's house. We were taken to the Italian Sisters. The Sisters were lovely to us. They had word that we were coming. It was dark when we got there. We must have looked weary. After resting a bit and getting refreshed they served supper which was a feast to us. Potatoes, meat, white bread—things we hadn't seen for a long time. We ate as if we were starved. The little Sister could not keep the bread plate filled. There were two big bowls of home-grown persimmons. We ate every bit. More were brought to us. The strangest thing was we did not feel ashamed to empty the bowls. We were hungry and glad to get our fill. Each had a nice, clean, soft bed. We slept soundly, almost too tired to undress. Next morning, November 9, 1942, we attended Mass in their beautiful Convent Chapel. There are 65 Sisters stationed here. They carry on many activities and could use another time as many nuns.

The Japanese were expected to come early so we were given an early breakfast. Twelve o'clock came and dinner was served to us because the Japs failed to put in an appearance. One o'clock the doorbell rang and the grand rush began again. We told the Sisters we hoped to repay them but they wanted nothing. They said they knew not the hour when their day would come. There was little time for a decent goodbye. The Japanese were hurrying us to the waiting rickshas. This time everyone was provided for. What a procession we made! All Hankow knew we were Japanese prisoners and seemed to resent it more than we did. Even the coolies drawing the rickshas were in sympathy with us. Each time we came to a halt on the street they explained to the gathering crowd what the commotion was all about.

We were taken to the river bank for a ride on the ferry. Wuchang was our destination. Two hours we sat and waited for the head Jap to give us the once over. He didn't think we were worth it for he never showed up.

Wuchang

While we were waiting an automobile drove into the place where we were. Leodah, the top heavy popo, who had never seen a train or an auto in all her 60 odd years, asked Sister Pauline if that was a train coming in. Poor creature! It was time she was going places and seeing things.

The Japanese from Hankow got tired waiting for the Wuchang officer. Rickshas were called again. This time we were taken to the Bishop's residence. This was very touching. School children informed him of our arrival long before. He wondered what had become of us. When he saw the group of us, tired out and worn to a thread, he cried. So did some of the Fathers. He welcomed us as if he were our father. He even had a cane ready for Sister Roberta who needed this assistance. He called Mother Mary Joseph, of the Native Community to get the baby I was carrying, and take it to her family.

While we were there, Sister Mary Evangelist and the other Sisters of Charity came over to greet us. They cried bitterly. We must have been numbed; something was wrong, we couldn't shed a tear. Sister Evangelist surely exerted herself to welcome us. She had been very ill. This excitement was anything but good for her. The kindness shown to all of us was marvelous. There were now twenty Sisters instead of ten. We doubled the number. The same night of our arrival Sister Concepta was put to bed. A few days later it was noticed that Sister Marie Alphonse could hardly drag herself about. Her body was turning black. It was necessary to keep her in bed. Two weeks later Sister Mary Evangelist went to bed. She never again recovered from the sick spell. After a while Sister Agnetta became ill. She was in bed about a week. Her sickness was due to the reaction of the past days.

We had good times with the Sisters of Charity. They are truly what their name signifies. They had a better food supply than we had at Hwangshiskang. They gave generously of all they possessed. Pleasant recreations were spent by giving performances. Home talent is always good. It was especially so since we made up our own plays which usually concerned some action about one or the other Sister. The Bishop invited us to his house. He played the violin. Father Cornelius played the piano. The young Chinese students sang English songs. They knew it would please us to hear melodies dear to the hearts of all of us. We gave a musical program for the Bishop, who enjoyed the talent among the Sisters.

We attended several Pontifical Masses. An unexpected privilege was to be ours. Every day in the Sisters' Chapel we had an hour of adoration before our Eucharistic King; besides Mass and Holy Communion each morning. What more could we ask?

We were happy. We seemed to have shaken the Japs off our heels for we never saw any. We had to remain behind the walls of the Compound but that was the least. The only thing that made us conscious of their presence was the air raids that took place in the middle of the night or early morning. As soon as the siren sounded we would creep to our place of safety. We did not dare strike a match or light a lamp; All lights were strictly forbidden when a blackout was ordered in China. Shivering and shaking we would remain in the hiding place until the release signal was given. We usually heard the planes going overhead. Sometimes we heard the bombs going off in the distance. During this time the Japanese would let loose the anti-aircraft which was very noisy and dangerous. Sister Evangelist suffered dreadfully during these times. She was afraid to stay in bed and too weak to stand the ordeal. We had many such scares. Sometimes after we had again retired for a half hour or so the siren would again shriek and out we would climb once more and run for safety. During the day, if white wash were hanging in the yard it had to be taken in. Sometimes we had to hang the wash up seven or eight times before it could be left on the line to dry.



READY FOR A THREE-DAYS TRIP
TO OUR NEW MISSION AT
HWANG-SHIH-KANG—NOVEMBER 19, 1939

THE HAPPY BEGINNING AND
SAD ENDING OF OUR MISSION
AT HWANG-SHIH-KANG



THE RUINS OF HWANG-SHIH-KANG
AFTER THE JAPANESE BOMBING

One Sunday the bombers hit the airport. We continued our dinner but not a word was spoken. It was too solemn and too tense a moment for useless conversation. Later the Fathers saw the smoke of some building that had been bombed. They saw the emblem on the American planes which made us very happy. Another time boats were hit on the river not far from Hwangshikang. Many Japs were killed. They say the Chinese in the hull of the boat became frantic especially when they saw the blood trickling down over the deck. We always feared the hospital would be bombed. It is surrounded by Japanese military. The house next door always had Japs on the roof when the siren blew. One morning a village not too far from Wuchang had its railroad station bombed to the ground. With it went the lives of more than 1,000 Chinese. Many of the injured were brought to the Sisters' Hospital. We later learned that more than 500 Japs were buried during this bombing. We thrilled each time we heard our planes, and always had the hope that war would soon end.

Then came Christmas. It was a lovely one. Carols were sung outdoors in the early morning. Christmas hymns with the accompaniment of organ and violin during the five o'clock Mass. Chapel was filled with beautiful flowers. Even the crib was there to remind us of the birth of the Infant Savior. We were all so happy. After breakfast each one received a package of candy and nuts. It is just the little things that really count and cause much joy. In the afternoon the Seminarians entertained. That evening was spent in trying to make Sister M. Evangelist happy. She loved to hear Sister Pauline sing and this was done in a big measure. Sister Virgila Marie played the violin.

Clouds hovered over the household of the Sisters of Charity but they did not let anyone feel it. The doctor told them to prepare for a heavy cross, for before a year would pass three of their Sisters would no longer be with them. Day by day we could see the life of Sister Evangelist slowly ebbing away. Sister Marie Alphonse was becoming more feeble all the time and dear Sister Concepta still clinging hard to life was able to make the down-river trip with us.

During the holidays we sent word to the Japanese Counsel that it was necessary to visit the crib of the LaCrosse Franciscans, our city cousins. They granted the permission of one day from seven in the morning until six that night. We had one good time; we saw all their Christmas decorations, gave the newly born calf the once over, talked over wartime, told them to pack their trunks in case the call should ever come and before we knew it we were due back at the Sisters of Charity. A few days later no more permissions were given. We were glad we struck the opportune time.

The LaCrosse Sisters butchered pigs and sent meat to us. They also sent bread. Sister Constantine of the Notre Dames had an abundant supply of rice which she freely gave to help feed us. The French Sisters, Notre Dame des Anges, had all they could do to keep body and soul together. They were being fed from the Bishop's larder. In China all communities are like one big family. The charity among the religious is beautiful. Things were going so smoothly we truly thought we would never make another move. The Japs left us so completely alone. Sister Hildegard voiced her misgivings one day. She has very much foresight. She said she didn't like to throw a wet blanket on our dreams but she thought we were due for another journey. Two weeks later the Japs came and told us they were taking us away.

Bishov K walski celebrated his feast day February 4th. We visited him on this particular morning to greet him and wish him many more but peaceful feast days. He laughed as he told us how positive he was that we would remain in Wuchang. He was certain the "Brownies" were happy to have us in Wuchang and no place else. We went home feeling as sure as he did. We were home not even an hour when the Chinese boy came to tell us the Bishop was locked up by the Japanese and the Fathers were all guarded. They said the Japs were going to send us to America. Father Berthold took the chance of

going to the Bishop's house for dinner that day. He was dressed in Chinese clothes and had no permission. Foreigners were forbidden on the streets especially when they were American citizens. When he saw what was happening he ran for dear life. Already the Japanese were at his house helping themselves and molesting the Sisters.

One cannot know what it means unless one lives through such moments. The whole body grows tense, waiting for things to happen. All the afternoon we were prepared for the uninvited guests. Late that afternoon they gave the house the necessary searching, looking in all the cupboards or wherever they saw a door. They took the sewing machine put chalk marks on the furniture and on the rugs. They informed us that the very sick Sister would not leave because they thought she might die. They thought it best that she stay with the Chinese Sisters who were not permitted to leave. Bidding us a quick good-bye they disappeared, leaving us in the dark as to when and where we were going. We were told we could only take the clothes we wore on our backs and a toothbrush. Knowing them from past experiences we dressed for the occasion should it come suddenly. Each one wore three suits of underwear, three petticoats, sweaters and three habits. We were spread all over the place. We were so fat we could hardly sit at the table. For four days we went about dressed that way when we decided we might have to wait a year before they moved us, so we undressed and went back to normal life once more. They trusted us and did not post guards at the gate. We felt convinced there was someone giving the report of our every movement. It paid to be careful.

For days we heard nothing until the fifteenth of February, 1943, when all the Superiors were called to the Japanese military headquarters. At this meeting they told the Superiors it was for their own safety they were sending them away. The day was set for February 19th. Each Sister could take a trunk and a suitcase.

When Bishop Galvin and Bishop Massi knew for certain that we were going they did what they could to hold the property. Italian priests were sent to each Compound and two Italian Sisters to each mission home. Whether they are permitted to remain there now we do not know. There was talk about interning them since Italy joined the Allies.

Our blind girls were taken to Mother Mary Joseph. She conducts an orphanage and the native Community in Wuchang. Her property is next door to the Cathedral. The two old popos were to stay at the hospital. The Chinese Sisters of Charity volunteered to care for them. Since then both these popos have gone home to God.

It was still dark the morning of February 19th when we assembled in the Bishop's yard. Flakes of snow were pelting down from heavy, dark clouds. All the Seminarians were gathered there. There were Chinese ladies among the onlookers, faithful parishoners who attended Mass at the Cathedral. Loud sobs were coming from every direction. The Bishop, so sad and solemn on this morning, bade everyone kneel down for a farewell blessing. It was worse than a funeral. The young students clung to Father Floribert, kissing his hands and pulling at his sleeves, begging him not to go. We left the scene quickly. While walking to the appointed meeting place the snow came down heavier and heavier. It was a wet snow covering the ground quickly. For about two hours we stood freezing and getting wet through and through. Thinking the Japanese forgot about us, the Bishop sent two of the Fathers to the military police station to tell them we were waiting. They invited us to

come to their office and wait. Here we sat on the chairs that had been taken from the priests and Sisters in Wuchang. One of the Sisters remarked, "The irony of them to invite us to their house to sit on our own furniture."

We spent a few more hours waiting. In the meantime the Chinese Sisters of Charity and the Native Community hearing we were still in Wuchang, brought dinner to us. How we enjoyed that meal! We were so cold and frozen and the hot drink warmed us so comfortably.

After the writing down of names, another examination of trunks and hours more of waiting, we were ordered to get going. Our blankets standing out on the sidewalk since early morning were thick with snow, nice and wet, too, when the snow melted on them. That is just a trifle in China. Our trunks were piled on trucks. The Japanese said the men will walk but the ladies will ride in a bus to the matoe. Picture the bus! An open truck with low sideboards, no seats and holes in the floor. Thirty-four of us were jammed on this truck. We stood up grasping on to each other and praying that the driver would be careful not to make a short stop and dump us out into the snow. We reached the river without a mishap. I wish I could tell you how much time is wasted in waiting. We stood in the snow for another hour. Finally permission was given to go down to the river. This time a small open motor boat with no place to sit was reserved to convey us to the other side. The Yangtze was rough, waves dashing up and down like the ocean and there we were struggling to balance ourselves so as not to fall into the water. It reminded me of Washington crossing the Delaware. I still see the picture. Father Elgar looked like George Washington standing on the helm of the boat holding an open umbrella instead of an American flag to ward off the wind and snow.

Another Excursion on the Yangtze

When we reached the Hankow side we were put on a large river boat. Sisters and priests from Hankow and Ichang were also there. Bishop Gubbels was with them. He was a Belgian. There were civilians, too. Our names were called but Sister Jeanne d' Arc and Sister Joanne were not listed. We offered to go back to Wuchang but the Japs would not hear of that. Finally after much arguing they told us to go inside and see what we could do about it. It was not difficult for we had no cabins. Sisters and priests were put in this one big room which resembled a barn with many stalls; the only thing missing were the horses and cows. This room was the steerage part of the boat. We divided the room with the wet blankets giving one part to the priests and the other part to the Sisters. Bedclothes were not furnished; if we had none we were out of luck. Only the bare wooden boards were there for us to lie on. We didn't mind. It was wonderful to know how well we could get along without things especially when forced to do so. The fathers' part of the room was used as a dining room. There were a few benches and three small tables. These were used for the scanty meals served to us on our down-river trip. Just small portions were given; if we asked for more the Japanese waiters used the two English words they knew, "no got," until we decided it was a waste of breath to ask for more even though we were hungry. If we felt like sitting during the day it was necessary to crawl in our bunks. The inconveniences did not bother us much. We made light of everything and this helped us to bear all the difficulties this trip entailed. What a lovely trip this would be under other conditions. We passed a vote to hire the boat in peaceful times and spend a week enjoying the beautiful sights along the muddy Yangtze River. On the way down river we passed all our missions. Our place looked the same as it did the day we left. The windows on the second floor were still open. What the winter weather did to the inside is hard to tell. The Bishop blessed the places as we passed by.

Even on this boat we were not deprived of Mass. The two Bishops were permitted to celebrate daily. Sometimes the Japs stood about with mouths opened wide, wondering what it was all about and why we got up so early.

At "Kukiang" or rather "Jojang," as the Chinese call the place, we were lined up for vaccination examination. We all had the papers minus the vaccination so we got by without any trouble. Four days and nights we lived on this boat then at Nanking they transferred us to one of the largest and finest river steamers we ever saw. Everyone of us headed for the steerage. This time we were fooled. We were all called back on deck; stood up in rows of four then called off alphabetically. Ears were strained as we tried to catch our names as the Japanese pronounced them. We were ushered to the best cabins and staterooms the boat had. The dining room was gorgeous and they treated us royally. Even Japanese staterooms were opened for us. I had the pleasure of sleeping in a Japanese bed. As we entered the room we were told we may keep our shoes on in the little part by the door. This was cut out and on the level with the floor in the hallway. The rest of the room was raised on a platform filled with springs and covered with a heavy green carpet. This was the bed and only with stocking feet did we dare walk on the rug. Six of us slept in the room for the night picking out the spot we wanted. It was very comfortable just lying on the floor. The next day about fifteen of us sat on the platform and studied Chinese; this spot was softer than sitting on hard boards. We could not understand the actions of the Japs at first. They are not so stupid, however. Had they taken us to Shanghai on that other poor boat they would have lost face. They always bragged about treating the Catholic foreigners in high style. They always told us they had an Ambassador at Rome and we need not worry, they would treat us alright. This they did and the change of boats was good for all of us. There was hot water and bathrooms. We all had a good bath before getting to Shanghai. We had Mass the next morning on a balcony with a winding stair. This was a pretty picture to see all the nuns kneeling about devoutly intent upon the sacred function then going on.

We were still in the dark as to where they were taking us. As our boat nosed into the Whangpu River we knew Shanghai was near. We spied the big Italian boat, "The Compte Verde," docked in the Shanghai harbor. It had been used for Repatriates before so when our boat edged near to it we thought we were to be put on it. Instead we went down the river for more than a mile. Here we waited some more hours when a chugger came along pulling five Chinese junks behind it. We were stacked on the chugger and our baggage was thrown on the junks. Some of the boxes opened and things came out; we were the losers, not the Japs.

Again we sailed up river. This time we felt certain we were going on the Compte Verde. Wrong again; they took us to the pier before the Custom House. For another two hours we stood around or jumped about trying to keep warm. There were no seats. Many made use of the grips badly smashed from the not too careful handling. Tired and weary we were happy when three gray busses drove up on the Bund. They were for us. There were 78 religious not counting the civilians and the Japanese guards. The busses were small; all the hand bags had to go with us. The Fathers could not be seen for the luggage piled on top of them. Sister Pauline and I were the only two women in the whole bus and we almost sat on the driver's back to get in. One good thing they don't seem to mind a little squeezing. It is a part of the yellow race's nature. We thought we were on our way to the convents and monasteries. These they passed and our suspense was not relieved until we drove up to the Chinese College at Chapei.

SECTION II.

Chapei

It was February 24, 1943, about 4 p.m., when we arrived at Chapei, a big Chinese College outside of Shanghai. This building was to be used for one thousand civilians of the United States and Great Britain as an internment camp. We arrived the day before it was to be opened. In spite of this we were heartily welcomed by twenty American men, also prisoners, who were getting the buildings and grounds ready for the first five hundred who would arrive on the morrow. They were very angry with the Japanese for making us submit to the enclosure and regulations of the Internment Camp. They remarked later, "There were no sour faces among you. We would have been willing to move the world just to make you happy."

After piling out of the three busses which were jammed to the doors, the Japanese lined us up outside the building to make sure we were all there. Greatly satisfied that none of us had tried to make an escape, they proceeded with baggage inspection. This inspection depended upon the individual inspector. Fortunately all of our Sisters passed inspection without much trouble. Up until this time Sister Agnetta managed to keep her typewriter and electric iron. She was permitted to write her name on the articles; this served as a claim slip. Sister Pauline's trumpet went through without any trouble. Sister Virgila Marie had the same inspector who very kindly overlooked the violin. Somehow they figured I had things of importance. Piece by piece my clothes were taken out and thrown on the ground. This time they found my camera. If I had thrown myself in the dust and pleaded for it they would have refused me. They claimed it greedily.

Butcher knives, hatchets, screwdrivers and other articles were taken away from many. The Japanese feared either the people would kill themselves or manage to break away if they had tools. The Americans were trying to rush this inspection so that the trunks could be carried in while the coolies were still on the grounds. We shall never forget these twenty Americans who were big brothers to us. Since we were the first of the internees to arrive they gave us the best rooms in the building. Twenty-six of us were placed in one room, seventeen in another and the thirty-five Fathers were all alone in another. We were frozen thoroughly. These busy men soon lighted the little stoves which the Japanese so kindly furnished for the comfort of the prisoners. There were many nice things they did for us and we were grateful. They could have just as easily been mean and hateful. While we were getting warmed up a bit some of these men were preparing supper for us. What a supper, after the meals on the boat! They felt sorry for us. Everyone looked tired and haggard, so they thought it necessary to give us the best. Pork was served unstintingly; Chinese cabbage swimming in the good grease of the pork; sweet potatoes and rice. We feasted like kings and said a big "*Deo Gratias*" to the God Who was so good to us.

At nine o'clock that night we had roll call. Seeing that everyone was present, we were given permission to retire. Our beds were made up on trunks. We had just about crawled in when at 10:00 p.m. the American men came storming at our doors with army cots. It was one grand confusion. Everybody helped push aside the trunks and before long we were ready for a good night's sleep on army cots. It didn't take long to get tucked in. Sister Beata was tucked in too snugly. She played a melody all her own, amusing the whole dormitory with her loud snores. We needed no one to rock us to sleep so we all slept the sleep of the just.

Eagerly we awaited the dawn of the next day for we may have the good fortune of being reunited with our two Sisters who were stranded in Shanghai

for two years. While washing windows we had an opportunity to see who was in the crowd as bus after bus emptied its passengers; some good natured, others indignant over the treatment they received. From the people we learned that the Maryknoll Sisters and our Sisters were at Sacred Heart Convent. They were not to be interned at Chapei.

There was much organization to be done. Committees were formed so that the work would be evenly distributed. Many of the people were to be pitied. Women who had never before washed a vegetable were expected to peel potatoes, skin onions and clean fish. They also had to take turns carrying coal if they wished to live in a warm room. Corridors and toilets had to be mopped. Delicate hands, usually so trim with red fingernails, looked very rough indeed. We pitied these people when the Japs told us they liked us because we were never fighting, while in the room next to ours there were only eight women who were forever quarreling and pulling each other's hair. The Japs were always being called upon to restore order.

The young girls were to be admired. While scaling the fish they sang so as to keep themselves cheerful and see the bright side of life.

Men, women and children washed clothes at an open trough. We rolled up our sleeves and pitched right in, bumping elbows with a man or lady next to us. The majority were very generous, offering us their washboards because they knew we came empty handed. We could obtain hot water if we had the patience to stand in line with a pail for about an hour. This we always did. Elderly women including the Sisters were assigned to watch clothes lines so that the clothes would not disappear in the process of drying.

The Sisters, or as they called us, "The All-Around Girls," worked everywhere. No job was too hard or too dirty; we just pitched in, heart and soul. The Fathers scrubbed floors, carried anything that was heavy and were never known to refuse a single request. The Sisters took over the bread cutting. This relieved Mrs. Logan who was in charge and who found it difficult to get volunteers to cut bread three times a day for a thousand people. The hard bread and dull knives put big blisters on our hands but we didn't mind. We were only too happy to have bread to eat. Mrs. Logan came home with me on the Gripsholm. She showed her loyalty and kindness on the long ocean trip.

Of course, everyone is interested in his stomach; wartime or no wartime. It is interesting to know how a thousand people were served in an hour's time. It was bread line style. No special formation, one just fell in wherever he would happen to land. Each person stood in line with his dishes. We, from the interior had none. The men managed to get three plates for us but we were a family of four. I had the good fortune of finding a Maxwell House coffee can. Who cares about the size and looks of a thing when one is hungry? Human respect has no place in an internment camp. Big, fat men with appetites three times the size of mine used to kid me when they saw my can. I was more fortunate than some of the Fathers who were using a wash basin for a bowl. One in particular, a little French Father, had his basin heaped nice and high with rice, soup, vegetables and fish. He used chopsticks since he had nothing else. After his meal he washed the basin in permanganate water then went to his room and used it to wash his face or to take a bath. We always told him he did not know the rules of sanitation or at least he was obeying them backwards.

The Sisters served the breakfast and gave generous portions. Of those who came home with us, there wasn't one who did not remark about the generosity of the Sisters. They told us they missed the Sisters dreadfully after they were sent away.

Rules were made and had to be followed. We were informed there would be no mail. Only by special permission could we write if it were absolutely important, then it was subject to censorship. One day everyone was permitted

to write to someone they knew in Shanghai. These letters were all returned. The Japs said we had too many words in them.

In a gathering of all the prisoners the Japanese officer told us if we dared try to escape we would be shot down without mercy. It was not foolishness but the truth he was bringing home to us. We had a margin pointed out to us. So far we were permitted to go. If we stepped over those bounds we could expect to be shot. We knew all the fences were wired with electricity. Escape meant death so no one tried. Some were caught getting parcels over the fence by means of a pole and basket. They were punished several days by being placed in the jail, stood up in a corner with faces toward the wall and one meal a day. The Japanese meant business and needed to be strict where there were so many concerned.

They praised the Sisters and priests highly, telling us that not once were they called to settle any disorder. They were pleased and edified because they always found us cheerful and willing to help each other. Room inspection brought the Sisters 100 percent each time. Convent orderliness is a big help in an internment camp.

To the Red Cross we shall always be grateful. Many bags of cracked wheat were given to us. It was used to make cookies, cereal and many other things. It was sent over before the war, therefore it was necessary to inspect it daily. Every afternoon about fifty of us gathered around big tables and picked out the weavils and worms that began to live in the wheat. Helga, the pretty young girl from Holland, remarked that she didn't mind the weevil because she thought it belonged to the grain. It was the worms she objected to. She shivered each time she saw one. By picking the bugs out while the wheat was dry we did not have so many to worry about when it was served for breakfast.

During our internment we were always privileged to have daily Mass. This was one blessing the Lord bestowed upon us; we had all the spiritual consolations. Our dormitories were converted into chapels where we could hear Mass, receive Communion and confess our sins. Our trunks were used for the altars. Each Community was assigned an altar to care for. In our room twenty Masses were celebrated daily. If a Sister was ill and had to remain in bed the bed was carried close to the altar where she could attend Mass and receive Holy Communion. Permission was granted to get hosts from the General Hospital where the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary cheerfully furnished all we needed.

Amusements were not lacking. Even the Japanese participated in the ball games sponsored by the Americans. It was great sport to watch them from our windows. Sometimes Bishop Rembert played the violin for us accompanied by Father Cornelius who played a very tiny pump organ. These programs were beautiful. My mouth harp worked overtime while the other Sisters gathered about and sang all the songs they knew. The Belgian Bishop was delighted to see the beautiful spirit that existed among all the Sisters. A program was arranged for the Sisters of Charity. March the seventh marked their fifteenth anniversary in the Orient. Two of the original group were absent. Sister Mary Evangelist, who died on February 22, 1943, but at the time we did not as yet know of her death; and Sister Rose Agatha, who in volunteering to remain with Sister to nurse her, was discovered to be of Irish descent. Try as she would, the Japanese would not permit her to leave Wuchang even though she held an English passport. She is in Wuchang alone with the Chinese Sisters directing their work and carrying on as in former times. She is not molested.

For five weeks we lived at Chapei and these five weeks were weeks of suspense. The uncertainty as to what might take place kept us on edge all the time. Every day we heard we were going and yet we remained. Finally at 11:00 a.m., March 30, 1943, while all the Sisters were busily engaged wash-

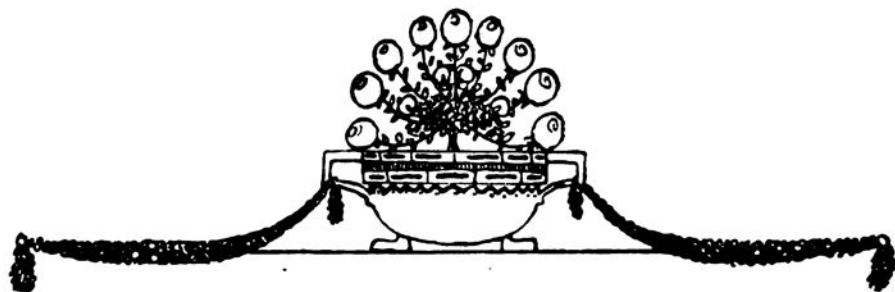
ing clothes, the Japanese rounded us up. They told us in two hours we would be on the bus bidding farewell to Chapei. Wet clothes were wrung out. Those hanging on the line were taken down by anyone who was close by and who offered a hand to help. The room was swarming with people helping us pack. Another trunk inspection and all its formalities before the trunks would be carried to the front door. The cooks feared we'd get nothing to eat so they carried pots of hot food right to the dormitories. These were tense moments. We were closely watched so that no message would be taken out to friends outside of the camp. Then too we did not know where we were going to land. We have learned it does not pay to worry but to trust in Divine Providence and every wrong will be righted.

Before two o'clock big red busses from the French Concession drew up to the front door. They were the finest in Shanghai. Our passports which were taken from us were returned as we marched in single file to the waiting busses. The Japanese were more than kind to us this day. They permitted the people to bid us farewell. Crowds assembled on the roof of the buildings, on the steps and on the lawn. The windows were packed not with curious people but with friends happy at our good fortune yet sad at their loss for there would no longer be that consolation they felt in our presence.

The entire Japanese force stood up in salute, wishing us happiness wherever we were going and regretting to see us go. No longer would they see the long line of Religious when they came to take up the twice daily Roll Call. They knew they would miss us and they did not hesitate to tell us so.

As the doors of the busses closed on the people, the French bus driver whispered to us that we were destined for Sacred Heart Convent and the Fathers to the Franciscan Monastery on Avenue DuBail.

Memories linger on as the people stood and waved till our busses were out of sight. We thanked God. We were truly grateful for all He gave us. We were especially happy over the newly acquired knowledge that soon we would be reunited with our two Sisters and that once more we would find a safe refuge under the roof of our Lord.



SECTION III.

Sacred Heart Convent

March 30, 1943, about 3:00 p.m., the busses drove to the rear entrance of the Sacred Heart Convent. Here we met our Sisters and all the other Sisters who had been detained in Shanghai these few years. Hands were waving, habits flying as the excited Sisters rushed back and forth on the sidewalk beside the busses. These moments we cannot forget. Tears mingled with laughter. One cannot tell these things, they must be seen to know what it is all about. The two Bishops and the Fathers had to be introduced. It was a touching meeting but had to be broken up quickly because the Japanese were eager to get their prisoners behind locked doors. Before we knew what was happening we were gathered together in a room, arranged in line alphabetically and then given a prison number. I was number 31. Mother Nuehre was given instructions not to let us out of doors, not to have contact with outsiders, and not to permit sending or receiving of letters. This promised, the Japs left. Before doing another thing we all marched into the Chapel and sang Te Deum in Thanksgiving. Mother Nuehre announced lunch would be served in the Community Room of each Community. She then acquainted us with our headquarters. We had two nice bedrooms, four beds in one and two in another. There was also a bathroom. Best of all, a small room with a table just large enough for the six of us. This we used for our Community Room. We liked our surroundings. Lunch was waiting for us in that room, a big pot of tea and a tasty cake. We chattered like magpies, exchanging the news and happenings of the past years. Sisters Jerome Marie and Virginette informed us we would have a belated Christmas after supper. We could hardly wait. While the internees were busy making themselves at home the Mothers of the Sacred Heart were busy decorating the dining room for supper. How pretty it looked when we walked in to find our table. Each table had a beautiful welcome card on it and a bouquet of fresh flowers. Three days of liberty were granted to the entire house and after that we were to settle down to convent rules. Our two Sisters were assigned the dining room before our arrival so they still had a task to perform before we could celebrate our 1941 Christmas. Surely we owe our two Sisters many thanks for the lovely evening they arraigned for us. Our places were heaped up with parcels. There were white rubber-soled shoes, the best walkers in the world, medals, holy pictures, kerchiefs, letters and even American candy. Surely it was a Christmas worth remembering. It mattered not if it was the 30th of March. We had much to talk about. We were especially interested in knowing how our Sisters spent their time in Shanghai. It must be told by them. It is chuck full of interesting things. Before our celebration was half over it was time for night prayer. We were tired but happy when we crawled into bed that night. Thankful too for the gifts.

The next morning obediences were assigned to each community. The Oldenburg Sisters, as they called us, were to take full charge of the Refectory, a corridor, the stairway leading to the laundry and to keep their own flat clean and orderly. Since I had had the Refectory at home, Sister Agnette appointed me Sister Jerome Marie's assistant. The work was easy. I felt I had been in that place all my lifetime. Eighty Sisters were to be placed when the full internment list was completed. Ten Communities were represented with one hundred and two Sisters interned. Every one was so kind, every one so easy to please; every one glad to be in the convent and not mixed in with thousands of other internees. Not once in all those months was there any friction. The kindness shown each other was beautiful to see for all the Sisters practiced charity in the highest degree.

The Bishop of Shanghai came to visit the prisoners. After a nice admonition he told us he was granting us permission to have daily Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The time set was from after the second Mass until 4:00 p.m. when it would be closed with Benediction. He said, "God called all His religious missionaries home, into one vineyard and we should make Sacre Coeur the throne of Christ the King. He called Shanghai the dwelling place of Christ, the King, since so many priests and Sisters were congregated there. Everyone rejoiced over the good news. Each Community was assigned two adoration periods a day where they would kneel on the predieu before the Blessed Sacrament, a half hour in the morning and a half hour in the afternoon. Sister Mary Carmel, a Columban Sister, whose convent was in Ireland but whose home was in Australia, shared our time with us. She also sat at table with us since she was the only one of her Community interned. She felt as if she belonged to our Congregation and we all felt very close to her. Their convent was one square away from Sacred Heart. She could see the house from the roof but was not permitted to go home.

Mother Nuehre, the Superior of the Sacred Heart Sisters, was so good to us. Although they are semi-cloistered she urged her Sisters to take part in shows so as to entertain us and take our minds off our worries. She also encouraged us to help with the entertaining. When Community feast days arrived all participated. On one occasion a group of Maryknolls put on a Dutch dance. The La Crosse Sisters are always putting on something good. The Loretta Sisters too were a big group and had many varieties of amusements. Sister Virgila Marie played the violin, while Sister Pauline did her duty on the trumpet. Sometimes ten mouth harps played the melodies we all loved and the Sisters in the audience hummed along. Sister Pauline has a voice like an angel. She was called upon any time to sing the favorite hymns of the different Sisters. She was also asked to sing before a group of charity workers. She did well and we were justly proud because she belonged to us. The Mothers used their slide picture machine and showed the lives of the saints. It was going to the movies for us. It took so little to please this large group. Everyone was truly grateful for the least effort made for their happiness. Then the school children had several performances to which we were always invited. The Salesian Fathers put on the play, "Tarcisius." The vocal and musical numbers were outstanding. All music was played by the Italian Band who were at that time aboard the *Compte Verde* but who are now prisoners of war since they themselves sank this same boat to keep it from falling into the hands of the Japs. The Mothers spent themselves from morning till night trying ways and means to be nice to us. The Fourth of July was a grand day. Two big American flags decorated the dining room. Each Sister had a small banner waving red, white and blue streamers which served as place cards. Cake with icing graced the table. Everything was patriotic and all had a good time. The Mothers sang "God Bless America." That day we were very careful not to let the Japs see our dining room when they came for roll call. There was one more big feature that was a surprise to all of us. To commemorate camp days an antependium was painted. The convent seal of each Community made up this souvenir. It is beautiful. We were fortunate enough to have a gold seal in our vow Catechism. The lilies, star, cord, date, coat of arms, everything is very clearly brought out in paint on the antependium. On it there are five Franciscan coat of arms.

Mother Carlos, F.M.M., Supervisor of the General Hospital in the Japanese Concession, Shanghai, gave us many pleasant surprises with French pastries and especially prepared sandwiches.

Classes of English, Chinese, Japanese, French, Latin and Greek were opened. We had our own Chinese class every day. Other Communities attended. French was my next pick. It kept me out of mischief. I also had the

opportunity to make use of it. There were so many French-speaking nuns with us. Sister Virginette took advanced art, drawing faces and blending colors. She is doing excellent work; when we left she was working on a tabernacle curtain. It represented two angels in adoration. Sister Pauline was giving trumpet lessons to other Sisters and practicing for her own benefit. She was also getting vocal training from Sister Ceceline, the La Crosse Sister. Sister Virgila Marie gave violin lessons to a Maryknoll and to the French Sister, Jeanne d' Arc, of Notre Dame des Anges. Sister Agnetta had the heaviest job. When Mother Nuehre had complaints she called all the Superiors for conference and they would be told to correct the erring subjects. She also helped peel potatoes and shell peanuts till her fingers were often sore. The white skins inside the eggshells had to be picked out so the shells could be ground into powder to be used for frost bite in the winter. Time was too short. The day would be over before we could think. Night found us dead tired.

We observed all convent regulations. Each Sister had a turn at table reading. We talked only on special occasions. In May Sister Agnetta had a severe sick spell. In June she decided to go to the hospital taking with her Sister Jerome Marie because she too was ill. Sister Agnetta returned in a week's time but Sister Jerome Marie remained in the hospital until two days before we left Shanghai to sail for the good old U. S. A.

Every day we had roll call. We could not leave the Compound unless we had a special permission written out by the Japs. Our Japanese men were always amused when we all lined up each morning. They could not understand why we all dressed differently. They wanted to know why we didn't take off our hats. "Aren't you hot?" one of them asked while he wiped beads of perspiration off his face. "Just why do you have to wear such funny hats?" another one said. He could not decide which he liked best; there were too many. With us were ten Orders. Sixteen Franciscan Missionaries of Mary; fifteen Sisters of Loretta; thirteen Franciscans of La Crosse; eleven Maryknoll Sisters; seven Notre Dame de Namur; seven Charities of Mt. St. Joseph on the Ohio; four Notre Dame Des Anges, French Canadian; one Columban; six Oldenburg Franciscans; and twenty-two Mothers and Sisters of the Sacred Heart. The Mothers had twenty-three who were not interned. They all remained with their own Congregation.

The Bishop told us how this same Jap when he went to the Fathers for roll call would sit at the piano and play "Home Sweet Home" or "Old Kentucky Home." After the typhoon which hit Shanghai pretty hard, the Jap had to wade through water up to his knees. He would stop at the gatehouse and put on his shoes and stockings before coming in to see us.

From June 25th until July 2nd we had a retreat. The first four days were kept privately; the last three were conducted by Father Gaechter, S.J., from Switzerland. He was not interned but staying with the Jesuits at Zikawei waiting for a chance to get back to Switzerland. Zikawei and Tousawei were also places of internment for Religious. Our Fathers were interned at the Franciscan Procurator on Avenue Du Bail. Behind the Franciscan Monastery was a Vincentian Convent where other Fathers were interned.

Prices in Shanghai at this time were enormous. Mother Hill paid \$1,800 for figs that would do for only two meals for all of the Sisters. Eggs were \$4.50 a piece; bread \$13.00 a loaf and going up; meat anywhere from \$30.00 a pound and up; shoes for children \$300.00 a pair; stockings \$15.00 a pair. One Sister needed shoes and her Superior had to pay \$650.00 a pair. An hour in the peddy cab costs \$20.00. Many people are starving and many are unable to be clothed properly. They could not afford to buy rice which was \$200.00, \$300.00 or \$500.00 a don. How the Sacred Heart Mothers fed us I cannot understand. Red Cross furnished cracked wheat and farina. These were served three times a day in different ways. There were privations but there were also

joys. The very fact that such a large group of women could live together so peacefully, never having ill feelings or discord toward each other at any time, is a proof that God was with them all. I grew to know and love each and every one of them. When time came for departure I felt the separation keenly. I shall always look back on those months with pleasant memories.

Rumors were always out about going and not going. Rumors too were spread that America was not doing a thing. Eagerness to know and yet to live in absolute darkness is very trying. Days were spent in pasting paper on all the windows. These orders were given by the Japanese because they feared bombing. The air raid siren went off any time and sometimes whole days at a time. On one occasion customers were caught in stores and had to remain there three days and nights before they were permitted to return to their homes. They slept on the counters and ate what the stores had to sell in the line of food. Blackouts are very common. Lights and windows are hung with black coverings continuously. Planes scout about at night to see if anyone is disobeying the blackout rule.

Early September brought new excitement. The Italians scuttled their own passenger ship the *Compte Verde* and two gunboats right in the Shanghai harbor. This happened at seven o'clock in the morning. Japanese were aboard the gunboats and did not know they were sinking until the water came on the decks where they were standing. The gunboats were raised again but the passenger boat could not be budged. It was loaded with cotton goods taken from the Shanghai merchants and intended for Manilla to be made into ammunition. It was a sorry day for the Italians. The crew was treated abominably. The civilians were roused out of their sleep any hour of the night. The Japs made them prisoners, locking them in their homes and taking the keys until they could intern them together. German Jews were also imprisoned. Their property was confiscated and they were placed in one of the worst camps in Shanghai. It was said that the place wasn't fit for pigs.

We were all packed for months expecting to go but the date was always changed. At last, on September 16th, the Japs phoned Mother Nuehre that they would come for trunk inspection that afternoon. Mother Nuehre told them she did not know who was expected to go. They gave her the names over the phone. Those listed had to get things together. That afternoon at a late hour the Japs arrived. The inspection was funny. Only those going away were permitted in the room. When the inspector was going through Sister Constantine's trunk he came across a corset. Not knowing what sort of thing it was the steels aroused his curiosity and he asked Sister to show him how the thing had to be worn. She was spunky and put it on. We laughed and so did he. In fact he was a bit embarrassed. He rushed the rest of her baggage as if he were happy to wash his hands of the job.

Since it was final we were leaving Mother Nuehre invited the departing Sisters to recreation in the convent recreation hall. A lovely program had been prepared by her Sisters. This was an extraordinary privilege to recreate behind forbidden doors. We all enjoyed the evening immensely. On Saturday afternoon, the day before departure, she had another big party planned for us. The dining room was converted into an ocean. The tables were covered with beautiful blue crepe paper which formed the waves. Small boats were sailing on this make-believe sea. Each departing Sister had a trunk to take with her. I was to take a trunk full of smiles. These little souvenirs had to remain behind. The big American flag was flying high over the lighthouse built up on make-believe rocks. It was so pretty. We appreciated all of it. Sadness filled all hearts for we did spend happy moments together in this convent. Separations are always hard. Our tears were quickly forgotten when hot chocolate and cake were served. There was not only one piece but as much as you liked.

We spent our last night with Sister Charitine and her Sisters. They are our city cousins and Sister would have it no other way but that we spend it



THESE FOUR SERVANTS REMAINED DURING THE
JAPANESE OCCUPATION



OUR BOARDERS 1940

with them.

Sunday morning, September 19th, the Japs arrived bright and early. They were ready for suitcase inspection. We thought it was our last inspection but the Japs fooled us. We were warned, however, that we would be turned inside and outside at "customs." Our tickets were given us for our cabins, cholera shots, money and the most important a little red flower which had to be pinned on immediately to show we were the prisoners of the Japs. During this time those who remained behind were permitted in the room but had to stand on one side. There were tears but little time for demonstration. It was a very speedy farewell, the Japanese do not believe in being sentimental. By 8:30 a.m. the big busses pulled into the drive. Our luggage went into the busses first and we were piled on top of it. If you ever visit China never expect a decent seat; for the people carry too much junk with them. We were packed into the busses like sardines. The day was extremely hot. In order to manage our baggage we wore black, it was easier than carrying it. Our mantles had to be carried also; there was no room in the suitcases for them. Orders were given that we could only take what we could carry in our two hands. No one could help us because each had her own two hands filled. We were not permitted to put the bags down and go back after them. Talk about effort. My Sister companion, who was ill, was hardly able to lug the lunch and the suitcase containing our caputzes. I carried her big grip and mine which had the weight of a trunk packed in them. We were intensely hot, but to make it easier we wore our heavy mantles. You can imagine how worn out we were when we reached the big shed where we were to have our personal inspection. For what seemed ages we sat in the open shed at the Custom House.

Another time we were lined up in single file and taken behind curtains made of bunting. I could gnash my teeth every time I think of this inspection. We thought our grips were finished but here they were opened again. This time was the worst of all. Anything that looked like paper was taken out. Our veil patterns and brow band paper were taken away. They dumped the salt we had right on the floor because it was in a small piece of paper. Only one book per person was permitted. It had to be a Bible. The Jap at the convent let me pass with two books, one a Chinese. When the inspector came to my Chinese book I told him it was my Chinese Bible. After assuring him I could read it he let it pass. The Fathers were not so fortunate: their books were taken away. They broke my crucifix and threw it on the floor. I told them to please pick it up if they did not intend to give it to me. This they did and hung it on a nail. Late that night when the last load came aboard they said it was still hanging there. Then came inspection of the person. We were felt all over. No notes of any kind. Photos and films were banned. A holy picture was considered a photo. If you had any it was thrown on the floor. All pockets were emptied and turned inside out. Girls examined the women. Some were more strict than others. Many of the Sisters were embarrassed to death. In this room were men, women, children, priests, and Sisters. Nothing private about it. Everyone could see what was going on. Luckily everyone was concerned only about himself. They took Mass wine, chalices, breviaries, Mass kits just as the notion struck them. They were positively mean on that morning. Unconsecrated hosts were thrown on the floor. We did worse than perspire during this investigation. After they finished we had time just to dump our things into the grips. No chance to make it look neat and orderly. One Sister had a comb with a few teeth out. Her officer told her to take it to President Roosevelt and tell him to give her a new one. There were other personal insulting remarks made. After this ordeal it was indeed a tug to get the baggage to the tender. I thought I would collapse under the weight of our two heavy bags. I could hardly drag them. At last I reached the tender that was to take us to the Teia Maru. The tender was all wrapped up in red and white bunting. This was done to prevent us from seeing the

Compte Verde, no longer standing majestically on the water like a floating palace but turned completely upside down looking like a huge whale sticking out of the water. The wind was strong and in our favor. When the tender pulled away from the pier the bunting blew up over our heads and we got a full view of the sunken vessel which the Italians had scuttled. The Japs were angry when they saw we got a good view of the boat. They surmised our inward rejoicing for they certainly lost one fine boat when that was successfully sunk.

After a long ride we reached the pier where the Teia Maru was docked. This meant more struggling with heavy valises. When we reached the big warehouse that was used for shelter from the hot sun and also the place to get us in the proper lines, I could hardly go on. Then came another shock. Sister Jerome Marie, my companion, and I were to take a different gangway. We were to be examined by the Japanese doctor before going aboard. Just the thought was enough to make me sick. We were listed as patients, therefore the examination. Sister went first then told me what to expect. While the doctor was looking for my name I spied it. Beside it was written heart disease. He asked me all sorts of questions and I gave all kinds of crazy and ridiculous answers. When he told me I had to go behind the curtain for a thorough examination I just about passed out of the picture. Providence was with me; once more the good Lord provided. The dragging of the heavy bags and the knowledge that if the M.D.'s examination resulted in declaring me well, I would miss the boat. After the examination he ordered me carried on the Teia Maru. My heart was in such a bad condition he wanted to call for the stretchers. I wanted to laugh loud but dared not. I convinced him I would not drop in my tracks but promised him I would take my time climbing the steep gangplank. He made it his business to have my baggage carried from then on. All the Sisters were hanging over the rail wondering what had become of me. They thought I was sent back to Shanghai. Had I been carried on a stretcher the whole crowd of them might have fallen overboard. We had more than one good laugh out of it but I'll assure you I do not care to have it ever happen again.

By the time I got on board, Sister Jerome Marie was on the top deck. Her cabin was down in the hold of the boat without a porthole. The Japanese fear lung trouble and they also do not believe in giving T.B. patients air. There were roaches crawling about and I had visions of rats running over Sister when she was asleep. I knew she could never rest in that room. After giving her place the once over I located my cabin which was upstairs. There were three berths and a porthole. It looked more inviting. My plan was to get Sister in with me. When I heard a woman complaining that she could not sleep in a berth but had to use her own bed because of a broken back I listened to the conversation and discovered she was to be my room mate. I lost no time looking up the Swiss Consul. I gave him my entire story. He said, "Put Sister in the room and see what happens." Plenty happened that same night. The man I saw returned to Shanghai and could no longer assist us in our difficulties. For two whole weeks they annoyed us trying to take the cabin from us. At last I rounded up another Sister also a T. B. patient. From then on we held the fort.

SECTION IV.

Teia Maru

About twelve o'clock we boarded the Teia Maru. We were just in time for dinner. After finding a suitable spot the thought struck me that it was exactly four years to the day that I walked on Chinese soil. September 19, 1939, I entered Shanghai at the Custom House pier and now Sunday, September 19, 1943, I walked off that same pier. After our lunch I inspected the boat. It was called the "Aramis." In its good days five hundred passengers could be comfortably accommodated. The cabins, wood, and furniture were all very nice looking and strongly built. The remaining lounge rooms were beautifully decorated. First and second class dining rooms were pretty. Pictures on the walls showed the boat in former days. Its whole structure had undergone a change since that time.

It might be curiosity on my part but I make it a point to see what I can see wherever I go. This I did before the first day was over. I knew its ins and outs from top to bottom. On the outside were two large white crosses. These crosses were our protection. Any boat, submarine or plane seeing these crosses had instructions not to fire at us. We had the right of passage over the water. At night these crosses were lighted by electricity. The entire boat was flooded with light. Two large electric crosses with lights of red and green illuminated the top deck of the Teia. No one was permitted on this deck. The Captain lived on it. Near the water also outside the vessel was painted the Japanese flag. The white background with the red ball in the center representing the sun was called by every American aboard, "the old fried egg." They hated it and always spoke about rubbing it off. My inspection tour included every part with the exception of the hold, where they advised us not to enter since the conditions were horrible. Rats, lice and roaches were crawling about everywhere. The men and boys who slept down there wore trunks only, no shirts because the more clothes you wore the more apt you were to become contaminated. Many of the Fathers from Canada had to sleep in this terrible hole. Besides this the portholes had to be closed, they were too close to the water. At times the jarring of the boat opened a porthole and those who had beds or clothes nearby received a good drenching. Sewer conditions were awful, leaving a stench that was almost unbearable. One good little French Father said he couldn't stay awake anymore so he finally ignored all these things and had a good sleep.

We were carrying 1,500 passengers and more than a hundred of the crew. We were more than overcrowded. If the Japanese were not so suspicious it would have been more pleasant. All decks were locked up with the exception of one. On this we were crowded like sardines in a box. We did not think it fun when we had to scramble over legs or bodies sprawled out on the floor. The people were not to blame either. Only 100 chairs were available. If one were among the more fortunate one could rent a chair for \$100 or \$200. One didn't dare raise oneself out of the seat for someone behind would be ready to grab it. The Maryknolls had one chair for the nineteen of them. They very kindly included me in on a turn. The noise and racket from morning till night and even all night at times was deafening. If one wasn't nervous one developed a case of nerves. Those who were nervous almost suffered a breakdown. To pray under these conditions was unthinkable. We tried spiritual reading in common but the reader's voice would not carry over the noise.

At night time this deck became a bedroom. Men, women and children, even the priests, carried their strawbags on the deck because they could not sleep inside; either the bugs tormented them or their quarters were too close. On this deck which would ordinarily be called a promenade deck were other

built-on dormitories. The library, smoking, music and lounging rooms were torn down and converted into large sleeping rooms. There were 240 beds in one room. Some of the Sisters took me up to see the place. They said, "We have a lovely cabin with 240 beds and no privacy. Next to a Sister would be a lady or a child. It so happened that eight Maryknoll Sisters got together. They screened off their portion of beds with sheets and called it the opium den because they had no snoopers to see them undress. Sister Luke slept next to a lady whose husband came to kiss her every night. She said she always worried for fear he would make a mistake and kiss her instead.

Unless one accepts these difficulties lightly they could become very burdensome. The strawbag was very narrow. If one turned she rolled on to the person next door. In order not to breathe into another person's face one would lie head and toe fashion. This allowed a little more freedom to roll about. There were no cupboards to hang up clothes so the washlines which the campers brought along were strung up in and out of the bunks. The place looked worse than a second-hand junk shop. There were no washrooms, even though more than six hundred people were living on the deck. One had to marvel at the patience with which the people in general accepted these conditions. Some had wash basins and were fortunate because it was impossible to get to a basin in the washrooms downstairs when the water supply was turned on. All bathrooms were locked; toilets only were open and these were too few for the large crowd. No one was permitted to take a bath, not even a salt water one. If you felt the need of it you could buy a tub of water for \$20.00. Before the four weeks were over they were paying \$50.00 and \$100.00 to take a bath. It was one big game of graft. Two days before we docked they announced public baths would be given. Each was supplied with a bar of salt water soap. We were expected to rub the entire body with soap then the appointed monitors would wash us down with a hose. Men and women had separate hours. They offered the Sisters but we refused. Those who had cabins were more fortunate. Sister Jerome Marie and I were among the lucky ones. We opened our cabin to any sister who wanted to come in and wash. The coats and blankets which we hung from the bed to the cupboard shielded those who wanted to bathe. The Maryknollers and several others made use of it. Another problem was water. One hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon the water was turned on. To obtain bottles we bought pop which tasted like dishwater. Bottles, cans and jars were filled and spread all over the floor. Appearances meant nothing to us so long as we had an extra supply to give each one a chance to have a wash. This water served for drinking, bathing and the washing of our clothes. At times the taste of oil was so great it was impossible to get it down. Sometimes when our thirst was very intense we just gulped it down and offered it for our boys held prisoners or those fighting for our country. We were passing through the torrid zone; perspiration rolled off our foreheads, our clothes were smelly and needed washing, while our insides were burning up with thirst that could not be quenched. Luckily we had a cabin. Because of it we were dubbed the Joneses and privileged characters but we didn't mind. Sister Jerome Marie spent her entire trip in bed with the exception of the first two days. After struggling about trying to stay on her feet she finally gave in and went to bed. Had we remained on this boat for the entire trip I doubt if Sister could have made the trip at all. Seasickness put us in bed on the third day.

Surely the Lord takes care of His own. Our cabin was converted into a chapel. Seven Masses were celebrated daily in that small room. Sisters, Brothers and Catholic passengers attended Mass and received Holy Communion. Our two grips made a very nice altar. One morning during the Holy Sacrifice a large roach came up on the altar to take a drink out of the ash tray we were using for an ablution cup. Without exaggerating, its body alone was

three inches long; his whiskers were not included. After being chased away he had the nerve to return later. This time I covered a rag over him, put the ash tray and roach into the sink and poured a bottle of water over him intending to drown him. Sister Camilla thought it was a cruel way to treat him. Her pity for him was more than he deserved; while she was in the act of throwing him out the porthole he got away. We had rats, too. One night I saw a swift movement behind the door. It was a rat taking his regular route over a pipe. They kept the incident from me knowing my great fear of rats. Another time we had a tray on the suitcases. Sister did not eat all her supper. A young rat boldly came up on the tray, paying no attention to the five of us in the room, he began to nibble on the food Sister did not eat. When we realized what was happening we all screamed at the top of our voices, frightening the rat so that he became so bewildered he jumped down on my bed. There was one more grand scramble when Sister Flora went after him and chased him away. I certainly felt relieved for my greatest fear was that he would crawl on me during the night.

In order to keep our cabin it was necessary to round up another roomer. Sister Amabilis, a Franciscan from Dubuque, Iowa, was a T.B. patient also. When the red tape was over the Swiss Consul agreed to let Sister share the cabin with us. We were dubbed the T.B. Ward. Because of this I had to submit to another physical examination before I got off that boat to see if I contracted T.B. Our place was the assembly room. It was here we discussed our likes and dislikes. When the three of us were seasick at one time everyone came to our rescue. Sisters Corita and Gerard carried our trays. For four days we could not get up. As soon as we moved we felt the boat was twirling around in circles. Sister Amabilis was continually gagging. Her Superior Sister Dulcissima was forever coming in to see what she could do. She was in another cabin but sleeping on the floor. When we showed no improvement Father Cornelius advised us to buy a bottle of Japanese wine. We paid \$150.00 for this wine but it did its duty.

We had to do our own washing. The weather was so hot that we wore white all the time. We couldn't iron clothes so we made use of human pressure. Sister Amabilis weighed 185 pounds. She began the pressing. I would fold the habit and she would sit on it. When she got tired Sister Jerome Marie took it to bed with her. When they both finished my habit was nicely pressed. We had fun, too. It was a sight to see Sister Amabilis climb up the ladder and park herself in the upper deck which was her home. When she was lying in bed Sister J. Marie could not sit up straight. She would snore, too, even while Mass was going on. Sister Jerome Marie just poked her through the springs and woke her up.

There were four divisions of dining rooms. First class was nice and always had better meals although all should have been treated alike. Second class was alright only at times the food would not go down. White table cloths were streaked with different shades. Anything that spilled left a dirty mark which was never washed out. The steerage where I had my meals was terrible. Only once in the whole month the floor was swept. Dirty red table cloths were on the table. Cigar ashes and cigarette stumps were all over the place. Just the sight of it upset my stomach. Good Father Coffe gave me his place the first day I went down. Sister and I had been eating in second class. We managed to bribe the head waiter and get two tickets. They soon caught on to our racket and decided we would have to make a change. After Sister remained in bed it was easier to carry her meals from second class dining room since our cabin was at the head of this stairway. I took Sister's place in the steerage which was in the fore of the boat. To get to this dining room we went down a spiral stairway. When the boat was not rocking it wasn't so bad, but when we did heavy pitching it was just like being in the dippy house at Chester Park. The stairs jumped all around and seemed to turn without

ending. Holding on to the banisters with two hands gave me little support. The stairs slipped out from under my feet. I felt as if I were flying in the air. When we tried to come up I had to make several attempts before I got anywhere. When I reached the table, if I got that far, I couldn't eat. I handed my plates over to the Fathers who wanted to know if I lived on air.

Our food was often unfit because of worms and other vermin. Boiled potatoes were always served including breakfast. These were so watery and cold, their jackets half hanging off that we felt positive they were boiled in Yokohama and kept in the water all the way. A yellow grease, called butter but which actually tasted like wagon grease, was to be spread on the bread. The meat was spoiled. Many of the passengers had ptomaine poisoning from it for three or four days. When this happened the Japanese doctor said, it's not the meat but because we crossed the Equator that the people were getting sick. One other time he blamed the Indian Ocean. There were many in danger because of the poisoned food. Scrambled eggs never looked appetizing. They were mixed with some kind of powder and tasted worse than they looked. Through the shells one could smell that the boiled eggs were bad. When the people came to the table they would smell the egg first then pitch it out the porthole. Sometimes we had fruit. If one was fortunate one could buy an apple or orange for \$5.00. Later the prices raised to \$10.00 even to \$20.00 apiece. Doctor Thorngate, an American T.B. specialist, suggested cheese for Sister since she was unable to eat what was served. First the Jap waiter said it would be \$250.00 a pound. Then he raised it to \$300.00. He thought he would sell it to me for \$350.00. I feared he would never stop raising prices so I called Mr. MacKennan, the American Professor, who had been in Japan 28 years and knew all these boys. I told him to get it for \$250.00 and he succeeded.

There were days we didn't eat a bite. It just would not go down. One night when Father Cornelius was visiting Sister Jerome Marie we had a room full of Sisters all talking about the chief topic, "food." Sister Bernett said she couldn't eat one bite of her rice and curry. She said it had too much meat in it for her. Father Cor said he didn't have meat in his rice and curry and he had his meal in the same dining room she did. He actually felt cheated. Sister Bernett said, "Oh you do have meat, Father, but you haven't been looking for it. It's the nice big fat worms that are cooked in it." He thought she was fooling. He would not believe it but said, "it's only nuns who find such things in food. She told him to watch the breakfast rice and he would be convinced. He ate no more rice after that. The other six Fathers at the table with him were shoving it in and pushing it down. Taking second helpings if they could get it. He handed his to Father Spawn and watched him devour the worms. The others, of course, were unconscious of the worms and Father did not enlighten them. He left them ignorant. He spent the next few days in bed.

The fourth dining room I did not see.

Some of the passengers were cases our government was looking for. They continually caused trouble on the boat. They fought with the crew and were locked up in jail but very soon were seen on deck again because they broke out. Even some of the women passengers became drunk and had to be put to bed by the Sisters. We were told if the Sisters had not been aboard there would have been worse things happening. It is better not to relate everything, but only when one has lived through these conditions one can believe them. I was amazed at the ingratitude of the Americans. Later I recalled any hard thought I had against the majority because I realized it was only the condition of this boat causing their actions. They wanted to forget. Perhaps someone may wonder what they were trying to forget. They are not like religious who have recourse to prayer. Other means are used to forget that we were in dangerous water. We had no lifebelt drills. There weren't enough belts to accommodate

the passengers. The lifeboats were unsafe. One of the Fathers decided to see how strong they were. As he hit a boat his fist went right through the boat, leaving a big hole in the bottom. Reading material was forbidden to be taken on board. After we were on the boat a few days they gave us propaganda books to read all in favor of the Japs. It told our losses and their gains. One night they put on a movie. It was the fall of Singapore and the Philippines. The audience walked away. They were so angry to think they had the nerve to show such a picture.

Japanese Red Cross gave toys to the children and canned milk to the sick. We got our supply of three cans each. The first night it came we spread it on bread. It so happened that same night we got seasick and from then on if the word "milk" were mentioned it made us ill. We gave it to the other Sisters who ate it like candy.

There were 98 American doctors on board but none could give medical aid. Their medicine was taken when they went through Customs. They were handicapped because the Japanese doctor disapproved if they offered their services. Dr. Thorngate warned Sister Jerome Marie to stay in bed. He feared hemorrhages. Having nothing to work with he thought it might mean her death. She had slight hemorrhages several times. Truly if the entire trip depended on that boat I do believe she would have died on the way.

There was one thing in our favor: the Catholics had Mass. The Fathers used every little corner. If they were sent away from one place they soon found another. Many lax Catholics returned to the faith on this return trip. Others who were Catholics in name only wanted to know more about our religion. Protestants admired the priests for their perseverance.

Lectures were held at least twice a week. People who visited some of the places along the way told about their points of interest and the customs of the people. Educational classes were held for high school and elementary pupils.

After leaving Shanghai we sailed for Hong Kong. Ordinarily from Shanghai to Hong Kong and Manilla the water is very rough; this time we had a calm sea. We reached Stanley Island, Hong Kong, September 22, 1943. Refugees were taken on. One lady who embarked had only the clothes she was wearing. She was taken without being notified. The camp conditions were terrible. The food lacks the necessary vitamins and the people are suffering from the cracking of their bones. It was said the bones just crumble into powder. They have permission to go to the beach but they are too weak to walk that far.

At this port we took on about 150 Filipinos. They were taken away from Hong Kong by the Japanese who did not want to intern them because they would have to pay for their upkeep. By taking them to the Philippine Islands these people had to shift for themselves. If they had food to eat or whether they starved it mattered not to the Japs. In a cabin about three doors away from us there were four couples and about twenty babies. When the door of that cabin opened it was like looking into a doll shop. There were little dark babies wherever you looked. On the floor, on the upper berth and under the beds. Truly they looked as if they were on display. The Filipinos are very musical. At night they entertained us with musical programs. There were about thirty or more instruments in the orchestra. Their stay on board was prolonged two days. We reached Manilla Friday morning, September 25th. A railroad track had been blown up and this delayed the prisoners who were to embark at this station. We left Manilla 6:30 p.m. Sunday, September 27th. We reached Saigon, Indo China, September 29th, about one o'clock. We entered the Bay of St. James where many Japanese boats were docked in the harbor. After a short stop we sailed up the Mekong River to a place about 15 miles from Saigon. All along this river are swamp lands and many palm trees. The natives live in grass huts. The people of this village, very much like Chinese in habit, came out to our boat in sampans. Bananas, pomelos,

oranges and pineapple they tried to sell through the portholes. The Japanese did not want us to have the fruit nor did they want the native to have any of their money for only the yen is used in this section of Indo China. We had none but the Fathers and Sisters of Japan did have and included us in on the sharing. The Japs were so angry at these men that they ran into the sampans with big motor boats tipping fruit and people into the water. Some of them were taken prisoners. They had their revenge. We were hungry for a little fruit so you can imagine how we felt when we saw whole stocks of bananas thrown into the water. Each time a bamboo pole sent a basket of fruit through the porthole successfully all the Americans cheered while the Japs became more furious because they were losing face. We celebrated Sister Jerome Marie's feast day on the Mekong River. The Sisters brought candy, apples, green skinned bananas and other treats. Oscar and his wife who were there, brought a pineapple which came through the porthole the day before. All in all we had a good time.

We were delayed a long time at this lovely port. Water was taken on. It was to be the last water till we would reach Singapore. About 4:00 p.m., September 30th, we left Saigon. On our next cruise we met a Japanese submarine. It was while the noon meal was being served. The Jap waiters jumped around for joy but the Americans were ready to pitch them through the porthole. Things were brought to order in a jiffy for there was a crew of men among the Americans to take complete control of the boat if the Japs pulled any stunts. The Japanese knew this and were more careful after that. There were no more demonstrations.

Singapore was reached October 2, 1943. While passing through the Straits of Malacca a shark was sighted. Why we stopped we never found out. There were no passengers to take on and no merchandise. Just killing time we remained at this port until October 4th. As our boat was moving out we were celebrating St. Francis Day having a party in B Dining Room. Just Franciscans were present. Someone donated bread, jelly and canned meat which made up the party. We had not gone far when the water became very rough. We were passing through the groats of Singapore. October 6th was quite an exciting day. Three big sharks followed the boat. We passed a strip of land which they called Borneo. The scenery along here was very pretty. I still have visions of one of the lighthouses on an island. About 7:00 p.m. that night all heads were over the rail, stretching to see what they could. We had two convoys going before us sweeping aside the mines imbedded in the water. There wasn't a sound from anyone for we all knew we were in dangerous waters. The suspense lasted until 10 p.m. when the small boats left us and our big ship took on speed again. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief. While going through this part we could see a brilliant fire in the distance. Everyone thought it was caused by bombing. Further investigation proved it to be an active volcano throwing out its fire and lava. Small islands and huge rocks seemed to spring up from nowhere. During the night we passed the Islands of Java and Sumatra. This seemed to be arranged purposely while all were asleep. We would have been too close to land had it been daylight and they did not want us to see a thing. At every port we were kept far enough away or taken to a different part of the island to avoid our seeing it. By morning we had a good taste of the Indian Ocean: monsoons, squalls and tidal storms they called it. Everyone was afflicted with seasickness from the terrible jolting and jostling about. We were all under the weather. It was a happy crowd who welcomed the placid waters of the Arabian Sea. Its smoothness put us on our feet again ready to brave whatever else might come. We were getting close to our destination. It was October 14 when Sister Peter treated us to cake to celebrate the feast of St. Therese. It is a big day in their convent; the only entrance day for the entire year at Maryknoll. Father Moore, the Jesuit, gave a talk on St. Francis Xavier. All hoped to go on a pilgrimage to this

venerable Saint's tomb when we reached India. Early on the morning of October 15th land was sighted. It was the coast of India. Before reaching the harbor we saw the big white building used as a prison of war for the Germans who were caught on four big boats they scuttled in the Zuary River. At 10:00 a.m. the pilot came aboard to escort us into the harbor. After a while the Teia was pulled in by two Portugese tugs. This gave us an opportunity to see the four big German boats sunk by German seamen before the war. These men were then taken prisoner but they were happy the enemy did not get the ships.

After four weeks of constant ocean voyage and seeing no one excepting the "Brownies," as we nicknamed the Japs, we were moved to tears as we saw the pier lined up with Portugese soldiers and tall black Indians all waving handkerchiefs and hats to welcome us. It was the first civil reception we had since we left Shanghai.

Mormugao, India, was the name of the little port. Although we were rolling in sweat it was winter in India. We received more than a warm welcome. It was a never-to-be-forgotten place for here we would receive our freedom. Once more we had agonizing moments for as soon as the boat was tied to the pier we received word that Macao was taken by the Japs, also that Portugal was to declare war on Japan. They were seriously debating as to whether the Jap boat could remain at the wharf. There was a question as to whether or not the exchange would take place. Many passengers felt certain we would be detained in India. The Portugese guarded the boat and permitted no foolishness from anyone. No one was allowed shore leave.

Since we got in a day ahead of the Gripsholm it gave us an opportunity to get a lay of the land. Not being permitted shore leave we lined up on the one and only deck to get a good view of Mormugao. We were all eyes. This little town is beautiful. The hillside a solid green dotted here and there with colored flowers. On the very top of the hill is an old fort said to have been built by Vasco de Gama. The steps and veranda of this fort were filled with people dressed in native costume. It was a pretty sight. Farther down the hillside near the dock was an old palace. Here the beautiful young maidens all dressed in long, flowing gowns and veils of blue, green, lavender and scarlet unconsciously gave us an opportunity to see them while they were trying to see us. A little church was jotted against the hillside. We knew it was Catholic when we heard the bells peal out the Angelus at noon. The good Father and his four native Sisters came to the boat to welcome us. These Sisters are Carmelites. They were to open retreat the day before our arrival but postponed it simply to make us feel more at home when we touched Indian soil. An old Bishop called a Patriarch came aboard to give us his blessing. With him he took one of our passengers, a Bishop, who was a Belgian and would not be permitted to land in New York.

We came in a season when the natives worked. The big cranes unloaded all our trunks and things and these big, tall, graceful men picked them up, put a trunk on top of the head and away they walked as if it were a small pasteboard box. That whole night they worked so that when the Gripsholm came in the Teia was unloaded.

The Gripsholm came in about one o'clock Saturday, October 16th. Even Sister Jerome Marie managed to get on deck to welcome it. Its huge outline against the horizon looked immense. How solemn we felt as it drew nearer. It was not painted gloomy gray but a white that looked whiter than white to us. Its outside was draped with the blue and orange flag of Sweden, painted on the boat. The huge smokestacks bore three royal crowns, while across its front was painted in large letters "Gripsholm." There were decks galore and every deck had people on it cheering and waving their hands to us even though we were their enemies. As they were being tugged in the Japanese on our boat went to the fore deck and waved big Japanese flags. The Japanese on the Gripsholm saluted their flags and sang their national hymn. It was all very

solemn. We did not have a like ceremony for the boat was not an American boat. Before that big floating palace was tied fast the American and Swedish sailors wanted to know why we didn't sing. A group of men from our boat yelled back, "We are too hungry, we can't sing." It was an eye-opener for the Japanese Captain. He would not make the exchange immediately because he knew he would have a boatload of dissatisfied Japs.

The Captain of the Gripsholm came over to see us, so did the crew. They just shook their heads when they saw the boat we were living on. The Captain promised he would do better for us on his boat. We were eager for shore leave. On Sunday, October 17th, we were permitted to walk about the port, but since the Japanese were not allowed to go about we also had to obey rules. While walking about we saw an old building with a statue of St. Francis Xavier in a niche above it. This was one of his mission ports and in life he had a chapel in this same building. The natives took us inside to show us a statue representing the saint after death. The chapel is very small and the statue is lying on the altar. The doors are barred so that no one may get inside.

Here we saw a lady with a ring in her nose. It was a pretty thing with a large green set. The gold ring was screwed in the nostril and hung down on the upper lip. She and her children folded their hands, made the sign of the cross and then kissed our hands.

Father Moore, S.J., a fellow passenger, managed to go to Goa, India, a short distance from Mormugao to visit the tomb of St. Francis Xavier. He told about the body of the saint which can be seen through a glass case. Every ten years the coffin is opened and the body is exposed for public veneration. Last year, 1942, was the last exposition. The people kiss the feet of St. Francis. Many miracles are performed. Father Moore said that in life St. Francis Xavier was five feet six inches tall but the body now has shrunk to four feet eight inches. This is due to an amputation of the right arm which Rome wanted as a relic of the saint. The miraculous part about it is that St. Francis was buried Chinese style. Lime and lye were thrown into the wooden tree trunk and on top of the body but after six weeks the coffin was opened and it was found that instead of the body being decomposed it was not discolored but whole and intact. The Chinese and Portugese men knew this was something extraordinary so they were easily persuaded to return the remains to Goa, the home of the mission saint. Father Moore also told about the many beautiful churches built by the Franciscans. Since the expulsion of religious from the island the Franciscans have never again returned.

Captain Ericson was eager to make the exchange. On Saturday they prepared tickets, berths and identification cards. We were standing in line until 11:30 p.m. Sister Jerome Marie was having slight hemorrhages so Dr. Thorngate said she would be carried off on a stretcher. We thought the exchange would take a whole day and it would be too much for her.

Monday night all grips arranged according to the alphabet were carried off the Teia and put on the Gripsholm. The big deck was closed that night because it was reserved for the grips belonging to the Japs.

Three Americans tried to make their escape by sliding down ropes but were very quickly captured. Small boats with large spotlights were on guard and spied them immediately. The one tore up any paper of identification so he was taken aboard the Gripsholm in handcuffs, put in jail and spent the rest of the way home in jail. They say he was wanted by the government for many charges so that accounts for his wanting to get away.

This was our last night on the Teia. Everybody was happy. Even the Whittaker baby that was born on the Teia seemed to sense she was being freed. It seemed the whole crowd helped sing the "Ave Maris Stella" that night. At least they did join in "God Bless America."

The exchange took place Tuesday, October 19, 1943, about 8:30 a.m. At eight o'clock all were expected to be by their berths and wait until they were summoned, then were to follow the leader. It is surprising how orderly everything was. Deck after deck was cleared. We walked off the gangplank on the fore of the Tei, followed the railroad track and went up the gangplank to the aft deck of the Gripsholm. The Japanese disembarked from the fore of the Gripsholm, crossed over the railroad tracks, followed a roadway behind the freight cars and embarked on the aft deck of the Teia Maru. This avoided having contact with the enemy and before two hours had passed the exchange of 3,000 prisoners was over and we were free people. The stretcher cases were the last to come over. Sister Jerome Marie was carried by six Japanese men and then passed over to American men who carried her on the Gripsholm. Sister was taken to the isolation hospital on board the ship. Doctor Kenny, the ship's doctor, came to visit Sister immediately. He told me that my nursing duties were at an end since they had plenty aboard ship. He chased me to the upper deck to get my share of the feast prepared for us.



SECTION V.

Gripsholm

What a day it was. We called it Thanksgiving Day. Chocolate bars, cigarettes, orangeade, iced tea were passed out immediately. Our eyes were as big as dollars and our stomachs were empty enough to eat everything. A long table, the full width of the boat was covered with clean white tablecloths. The waiters were carrying tray after tray of good food and the ex-prisoners were sending up cheer after cheer each time a waiter put in his appearance. We all forgot our manners on this day. There was turkey, chicken, ham and sausage, potato salad, lettuce, eggs, tomatoes, olives, pickles and pickled onions; any kind of bread one liked. It was served buffet style. Each one got a paper plate, a knife and fork. It was a help-yourself fashion. Before we began we sang "God Bless America." There were free drinks that day. Everything was done to make us happy and to satisfy our appetites. The head men were most solicitous about the Sisters.

While the crew were cleaning the cabins they found two Japanese girls who had locked themselves in the room planning on going back to America. They begged and pleaded with the Captain but he could not permit them to stow away on his boat. He very kindly had the Doctor write out prescriptions for them and then ordered two nurses to escort them to the Japanese boat. If this had not been done these girls would have been punished severely.

We had to remain on deck until five o'clock. It was a pleasure to sit on deck. There were tables and chairs enough for everyone. Not only one deck but four decks were opened for our use. Besides there were big lounge rooms, library, a music room and smoking rooms; even bar rooms where they later sold drinks to the passengers. There weren't any "don't" signs posted about. Surely we felt the freedom that was just given us. Even the dispositions of the people changed. It was quite a lesson. It proved that constantly forbidding things can cause more harm than granting a little freedom.

About 5:15 p.m. everyone had been ushered to his cabin. Nice clean beds were turned down waiting for us to creep into. Our baggage was already delivered into the stateroom. There were no hitches in the business, everything went like clockwork.

Mr. Langdon remarked what a picture we all made during the exchange. Men in shorts and women in sun suits. He thought they looked "crummy" as he expressed it. He also stated the only ones who looked as they should were the nuns who had the starch where the starch should be. He added that it was the wish of Captain Ericson that all men be fully dressed at mealtime. He also asked that the women put aside their sun suits at least when it was time to go to meals. That first night it was difficult to recognize some of the passengers. "Clothes make the man," seemed to be a true proverb.

There were four dining rooms with meals served in two shifts. It was a pleasure when the waiter blew the bugle announcing that the second shift was due in the dining room. The clean floors, white table linens and the quiet but swift step of the tall, stately waiters, immaculately clean, caught the eye of everyone. The kindness of these men filled our hearts with gratitude. We personally appreciated the Swedish people and what their government was doing for us. A delicious supper was prepared for us topped with heaps of ice cream. You may be sure we were a changed people. That night we sang the Ave Maris Stella with more zest and power than ever before.

How we pitied the Japanese citizens. That night while strolling on the dock they told the passengers on our boat that all the women and children were sent down to the hold of the Teia Maru. The remaining women were



THESE BABIES HAVE BEEN ADOPTED
BY CHINESE FAMILIES



CHARMING LITTLE MISSES IN
THEIR BIG STRAW HATS

in the dormitories mixed right in with the men. The cabins were occupied by men only. They were to be fed two meals a day, thereby preparing them for life in Japan. The little children were worried. Orders were given that no English was to be spoken on the Teia. Anyone offending this order would be subject to punishment. We were sorry for them. The majority of these children were born in America and knew only the English language. They all had to pitch in and clean the boat. They were now in the hands of the Japanese Government who deals just as severely with its own as it does with prisoners of another nation.

The Teia was detained because it took four days and night to unload the Red Cross boxes sent to the Americans in the Far East. Our only hope is that these packages will be truly delivered. The Swiss Government is to be in charge of releasing these parcels.

Early Thursday morning, October 21, 1943, the Teia Maru was pulled out to deeper waters by the little Portugese tugs. They were on their way to Japan. Their last remembrance of the Gripsholm must have been a deck full of clothes lines and clean white clothes waving a farewell to them in the breeze. Although we spent a week in India time seemed short. Hot water was turned on and everyone took advantage of it to wash their clothes.

Shortly after the Teia Maru left, Mr. Arthur, one of our passengers, died. He was buried on the hillside at Mormugao, India. His coffin was draped in the flag of his native land. It was the first sight we had of Old Glory. It was too solemn a moment to cheer.

Friday, October 22nd, about 9:00 a.m., the Gripsholm left the shores of India. We watched until the people and the place could be seen no more. We were once more out on the big ocean with eleven days of sea and sky before us. We did not mind it for each day was to bring us nearer home.

Time did not drag. We were hardly out of port when letters were passed out. Letters from the U. S. A. Those who did not get any rejoiced with those who did. Another cue was formed, this time to sign up promissory notes and check up on passports. Since I took care of Sister Jerome Marie's I had to double up and stand in two lines. My time was well taken up. The luncheon menu informed us there would be life-belt drill at three o'clock. We saw the crew go out in lifeboats but did not know what we were expected to do. Elsa, our Swedish Stewardess, showed us how to take our life belt off the ceiling and how to wear them. She thought perhaps I would not be made to wear it since it was just a practice drill and I could not get it over my veil board. The officer thought otherwise and made me put it on then and there. Such struggling! It was one time I had the starch taken out of me for my clean caputz was crushed and my board was shoved together. One Maryknoll Sister said if I would tell our Rev. Mother to take an ocean voyage and get squeezed into a life belt, she felt certain before the trip would end Mother would change our headgear.

There was more standing in line to fill in declaration slips. We had to tell of all the places we lived from the time we were born until the present day. Also the employment we had, the employers and the wages we drew. Whether we were ever a court case and if we knew of anyone working against the U. S. Government. Sixteen sides had to be filled in. After we finished this slip the government knew us inside and outside. Large signs were posted all over the decks: "Magazines will be distributed, get in line." There were lineups for candy bars. A slip of paper was given at the dinner table and this entitled one to a bar of good chocolate candy. Movies were shown. Four times the same picture was repeated so that all could see it.

Plenty of room was reserved for daily Mass. On Sundays at ten o'clock High Mass was sung in the Rose Lounge where all the Catholics could attend. The Mass of the Angels was sung, the priests and Sisters alternating. It was beautiful and made quite an impression on some not of our faith. At this

Mass we had a sermon. The different priests taking turns to speak.

October 25th, about 7:00 p.m., there was a great commotion on board ship. A burning rocket fell close to the boat. Some thought it came from friendly airplanes. That same night other rockets were directed toward the boat. This happened about three in the morning. A man who had been scanning the heavens for a sight of the Southern Cross, went to Captain Ericson to report it. The Captain became angry and very quickly put the man in his place. He asked him who appointed him deck guard. He said there were guards on watch and it was not necessary for him to patrol the deck. He sent the man indoors and told him to go to bed. The poor fellow was squashed.

The northern part of Madagascar was very rough. We had days of seasickness through these waters. Doctor Kenny knew his business. He was always ready to serve and his medicine hit the spot. He was exceptionally good to Sister Jerome Marie through the entire trip. The Red Cross Nurses were real companions as well as nurses. Rhode, the man who carried Sister's meals, often spoke to her in the Swelish tongue when he couldn't express himself in the American language.

Sister had a stateroom, a beautiful one. A rug covered the floor and there was all the nice furniture that goes with it. A bathroom was also connected with this room. Everything was so convenient. Sister Mary Rose, from Techny, Illinois, was her roommate. She occupied the upper berth. She was seldom in her bed during the day. This gave Sister Jerome Marie a better chance to have visitors. The arrangement of the room would not permit us to have Mass but Sister received Holy Communion every day. Father Pfeur, M.M., carried the Blessed Sacrament to Sister and to Father Boule who was also a T.B. patient in this same section. Sister Stella Marie, Maryknoll, and I answered the prayers and arranged the altar. This ceremony always impressed me. I was happy Sister had the consolation of the Sacraments.

This boat also provided a time for prayer. Often during the day a group of Sisters would gather together and pray one rosary after another. On "B" deck it was possible to have spiritual reading. It seemed when it was time for any religious function this deck was preferred. Every night when the clock struck 6:30 Sister Rachel, Sister Corita and I spent one hour in prayer. It was so peaceful on this vessel: quite a contrast to the Teia Maru.

One afternoon our attention was drawn to a shark that was showing off. It leaped out of the water at least twenty times. There were others with it but this one did all the work. Each time we neared a port, about three days out our boat was followed by the albatross. They are beautiful but so immense. When we began to sight land we would lose the albatross and the sea gulls would take their place. Hundreds of them were peacefully riding the waves and picking the bits of food floating on top of the water.

November 2, 1943, early in the morning the white chalk shoreline of Africa appeared. That night at 8:15 we docked outside the harbor of Port Elizabeth, South Africa. The glittering lights welcomed us: they were beckoning to us: urging us to hurry. Airplanes of the Royal Air Force circled over us the entire night. Early next morning, November 3rd, the pilot was taken on and we were pulled into port. The people of this town were not permitted on the pier. There were some exceptions made by the Mayor. Because of this Father Powers was permitted to greet us as we disembarked. He directed us to the outside gate where he had taxis waiting to take us wherever we wanted to go. On our way out we met three young Fathers fresh from Canada. They arrived the same day we did. They came on an old freighter and were bound for the central part of Africa where the natives are really hard to manage. One was an American who entered the monastery in Canada.

While at breakfast this same morning, Gustave Johnston, our Swedish waiter, told us it was a meatless day in Port Elizabeth. Sister Luke said, perhaps the Mayor proclaimed it meatless to keep the cannibals from eating us.

We were warned to take good care of our identification cards for without them we could not get back on the boat. The Mayor of the town turned his city over to the passengers of the Gripsholm. Everyone in Port Elizabeth was ordered to prepare for a guest for the night. If they had no room they were expected to do some other kind act toward anyone from the Gripsholm. The religious communities put in a bid for the Sisters and priests. When we got outside the gate we were rushed into a taxi and sent to Holy Cross Convent conducted by Irish Dominican Sisters. Such hospitality! There were five Maryknoll Sisters with me. I was the only one dressed in black. After the introductions which were given in the form of kisses, one on each cheek, we were told to be seated. Since I was the only Franciscan they insisted that I take the head of the table. I was embarrassed to death when they called me Mother and expected me to take the part of a Superior. Seeing no way out I acted the part the best way I knew how. I am still among the living after the experience. They wanted us to stay for the night. None of us expected this and told them we would have to return to the boat. I knew I could not stay because Sister Jerome Marie was on the boat and she would worry. Tea and cake was served to us as soon as we entered the house. We were then taken to the pretty chapel to thank God for making the voyage so far a safe one. Here we met a big, fat, colored mammy showing a mouthful of white teeth while she said, "Bless mah soul, all the way from China and them's Americans." She was very friendly. The Mother Superior took us to all the classrooms. We expected to find colored children but as the door was opened we saw beautiful young girls of high school age; they were not perfectly white, more of a tannish complexion. Sister said they are called Afghanistans and are a mixture of Malay and Dutch. The language sounded like the Dutch language we heard in camp and yet it was different. They are taught English in school. They were more than pleased to meet English-speaking people to know whether they could understand the language when spoken by people of that tongue. This school had 350 pupils. They also wanted to know about China and Japan. Sister Gemma prayed the Hail Mary in Japanese and I prayed it in Chinese. After all the rooms were visited they sang the National hymn of their country in their native tongue. We were then ushered to a big dining room. The sisters had everything of the very best to eat. South Africa has very much fruit. Whole pineapples along with other fruit decorated the table. It was one grand banquet enjoyed by everyone. Sister Mary Ellen met her old aunt whom she had never seen. She is a Dominican, stationed at another mission but they brought her to this house to see Sister. She is 86 years old. Although she had never seen Sister before she picked her out of the crowd. She said she resembled her own dear sister so much she could not make a mistake. After dinner we visited the Snake Farm. A colored man had snakes twined around his head and body. All were poisonous but obeyed this man. Eighty-five percent of the serum used in this war for snake bites comes from this farm. There were many other interesting things to be seen here but I was eager to get back to the boat. Sisters Stella Marie, Xavier Marie and I broke away from the crowd. We visited St. Augustine Church and then went back to the boat. While walking on the pier the wind nearly tore us apart. When we reached the Gripsholm we found that almost everyone stayed out for the night and not more than ten Sisters out of the 94 returned. They were having one glorious time.

Here in South Africa they have a beautiful custom. When the clock strikes twelve everybody stops work. Cars do not run until five minutes after. During this time they are expected to offer prayer to God.

The next day early we started out. We explored all the department stores. On the way we met Mr. Perry, the man who makes suitcases in Port Elizabeth. He and his chauffeur took us for a ride around the town. He also gave each of us a valise as a souvenir of South Africa. We were within 3 miles of the

place where they are taming wild elephants. They drive them out at night into the glare of large electric lights then feed them oranges. They hope to have them tame very soon. Monkeys come from the trees and climb into the automobiles. They are very tame but become angry if they do not get something to eat.

Port Elizabeth has about 200 industrial plants. It is a clean city. It reminded me a little of Honolulu only it is not quite as pretty. It was spring-time at this port. After seeing all the sights we paid a last visit to our Lord in St. Augustine Church, then made our way to the boat for it was time for departure. Five p.m. we bade farewell to South Africa and to the people who treated us so royally.

As the little tugs were pulling us out to deep waters we could see the steel framework of the mines that were laid at this particular spot. We also saw the masts of American boats sunken by the enemy. We were told to be prepared for rough waters. Because of mines around Cape of Good Hope we had to follow a lower course which brought us into the currents of the Indian, Antarctic and Atlantic Oceans. What a tossing and pitching the boat did for several days. All the passengers were seasick. The weather was extremely cold while crossing the Equator this time. Red Cross gave out woollens to keep the people from freezing. The ship had heat in it so that the babies would not become ill. About three days out we saw a submarine and a submarine chaser. We usually prayed harder during these times. A few calm days followed the stormy ones. We were always grateful for the change. When I felt well enough I took knitting lessons using the needles I purchased at Port Elizabeth.

To the Red Cross is due all praise and respect. These hundreds of men, women and children felt the kind hand of charity showered upon them by this wonderful organization. I know for a certainty that every Sister, priest or Brother among the repatriates think highly of the splendid work of those in charge. The nurses were especially kind, so was Miss Anne, the efficient distributor of Red Cross articles, including clothing, toys and candy.

Americans are big-hearted. Each man representing the State Department did not hesitate to lend a hand wherever and whenever needed. The ship's doctors were always ready at any hour of the day or night to give relief to the sick.

We felt very close to the Swedish crew who went out of their way to make us feel at home.

A big "thank you" to each and every one and a special one to Captain Ericson, the commander of the Gripsholm. We pray that God may keep them all henceforth even to eternity.

On the 12th of November, Mr. Turner, another passenger, died. His body was kept for more than a week. The ship's radio was trying to locate his daughter, who two years ago attended college in America. Since then, unknown to her parents, she was married and could not be found. They finally reached her and she told her mother to do as she thought best. Mrs. Turner carried out the wishes of her husband who wanted to be buried at sea. Only two Maryknoll Sisters attended the funeral which took place about 4:30 in the morning. The body was draped in an American flag and lowered to the water. The board was tilted and the body slid into the current. After turning over about three times it disappeared. The weight of the stones in the wrapping caused it to sink. Later two large whales were seen following the boat. The same day of this death, Doctor Kenny operated on Mrs. Pierson for appendicitis. This operation was performed in the middle of the night. The boat was stopped so as to avoid any mishap from the jarring of the motors. It was a successful operation. The lady was able to be about when we were ready to get off the boat.

It was evident the Captain wanted to keep everyone's mind occupied so as not to dwell on the boat or the dangerous waters. There were lectures on Thibet, Indo China and many other places. Because of the talent among the passengers, musical programs were arranged: voice, piano and violin. Father Lenehan is a splendid violinist. Even the little Swedish deck steward gave a program for the Sisters only. It could not be kept a private affair for everyone wanted to hear him.

To avoid being quarantined in New York every passenger had to be vaccinated. Long lines were again formed, this time to get our passports. This was before reaching Rio de Janeiro, South America. To get off the boat we had to turn in our passports and reclaim them when we would again board the boat.

Early November 15, 1943, we were docked out of port. Heavy fog delayed our landing. The first sight we had of South America was of huge mountains hidden in the fog and clouds. This coastline is very rugged, peak after peak rises up against the sky. Through the clouds we could see the statue of Christ the Redeemer or the Corcovado as the natives call it. It was barely visible with the dense fog and low hanging clouds. The extended arms gave it the appearance of a cross. Everyone was on deck to see it. A small boat waving an American flag passed by. The whistles and cheers were deafening. It was the first boat we saw waving the Stars and Stripes. Airplanes circled all around us. The planes were so close we could see the men in them wave to us. As the fog lifted we got a good view of the land. A large airport is built on the harbor. It is just new. We were told that a week before our arrival a bishop and two priests were killed at this port. Because of the fog the wing of the plane was knocked off when it hit a large building. The plane fell headlong into the sea.

For hours we were in line trying to get our identification cards. About 3:00 p.m. we finally got off the gangplank. The people of Rio were so disappointed. They made plans to entertain us and could not carry them out. Father Brandley was permitted on the pier to welcome all religious. Sister Dulcissima had the name of a convent she wanted to look up since she promised Sisters in China she would report to the Mother Superior of their safety in the Orient. Father Brandley directed us to a taxi but not until he had questioned me whether I was alone. When I told him about Sister he just said we shall look after her.

Maris Stella, the convent we were in quest of, is built high up in the mountains on rocks of granite. Rio is noted for its granite. They have a splendid view of the ocean. The Sisters, Daughters of Jesus, conduct a boarding school for girls. Only one Sister could speak a little English so we managed to get along. The Portuguese and Spanish language are spoken here. They had one pupil who came from England in July. Her father works for the British Embassy in Rio. She told us the ship she came on was bombed. They were picked up by another ship which was also bombed. They were then rescued by planes and finished the rest of the journey by air. She refused to tell the names of the ships. They were forbidden to do so.

The Sisters served us lunch. Bananas from their own trees were a special item. We had a delightful time with them. At six that same evening all the Sisters and priests were to assemble at the home of Archbishop Cardeal. His residence is a real palace. One room is prettier than the other. Permission was given to make a visit in his private chapel. The scarlet drapes and hangings add charm to this wonderful place of prayer. He looked very handsome seated on his throne of scarlet and gold. Through his interpreter he gave us an encouraging talk. He invited the whole crowd to hear Mass and receive Holy Communion next morning in the oldest but most beautiful church in Rio. This Mass was to thank God for bringing us to a safe port and to beg Him to give us a peaceful voyage the rest of the journey. We then knelt for his blessing. It made me appreciate my vocation as we went in single file to

kiss his ring and receive an individual blessing. He thought I was a Benedictine. Through an interpreter I had to explain our work and tell where we were located. Each one was presented with a holy picture. This over, it was late so we rushed back to the Gripsholm. After these excursions everybody visited Sister Jerome Marie and told her the current events. Each one had different experiences.

Next morning early we set out for Mass. A Boy Scout was waiting to escort us to the church. It was just a short walk from the dock. The church is immense. Its interior is magnificent. Beautiful paintings adorn the walls and ceiling. There are balconies where groups of people can attend Mass upstairs. At this church we saw the Canons. They are priests who do not do active work in parishes. Their duty is to pray and chant the Office.

Father Comber celebrated the Mass. When we received Holy Communion we went up about fifteen steps into the spacious sanctuary and there received. It was like profession day. Father Brandley delivered a very nice sermon. After Mass we were taken to a small restaurant conducted by working girls and directed by Sisters. Here we were given breakfast. On this day they broke down a tradition that has existed from the time this restaurant opened. No man ever entered its doors. This day priests and laymen alike were invited.

We were also told that in Brazil no Sister is ever seen speaking to a priest in public. A woman never stops a priest on the street to have a conversation. If she does the people are scandalized. When priests meet each other, no matter how crowded the street, they give each other the kiss of peace. These are all South American customs. We learned that 98% of Rio is Catholic but only 8% practice their religion, yet they all wish to be considered Catholic. There is much missionary work to be done in that country. They need priests and Sisters who are willing to go out among the people and teach them the truths of their holy faith. Parishes are not heard of. The priest is paid to go to a church to celebrate Mass. This situation is very pathetic. Many of our zealous Fathers are eager to be sent to this territory and there preach the Gospel of Christ.

After the breakfast, Miss Lacombe adopted us. There were five in our party, Sisters Dulcissima, Amabilis, Flora, Bernett and myself. We were taken to the mountain where the statue of Christ looks out over all of Rio. This mountain is 2,300 feet high. A trolley car drawn up by pulleys takes one to the top of this mountain. It is a very interesting as well as exciting trip. The climb is so steep that at times it seemed we would tumble out of the car. On this incline one gets a good view of Rio from all angles. At places the mountain looked like a jungle so thick and dense were the trees. Groves of banana trees grow wildly and are thick with fruit. Very large and oddly shaped oranges also grew here. The branches of the mango tree spread all over the place. It too was laden with fruit. Flowers and ferns of every description covered the mountain. I could rave on forever about the beauty of this place. It's a real fairyland. We had the good fortune of going up the incline with the man who made the statue. He is a Frenchman but his name I could not read after it had been written. Ten years he worked on the idea of building the statue, then it took two years before the idea developed. All the citizens of Rio have a part in it. It is made of soapstone and cement and is weatherproof. The soapstone is cut out like tile and pasted on heavy paper. Each paper is the shape of a triangle. The soapstone is also cut triangular. The small triangles are carefully pasted into the large one. When a paper was completed it was taken to the man who took it up to the statue and cemented it onto the base. The hand is as long as I am tall. The statue is 175 feet high. It is not yet complete. A block marble base is now under construction. We sang the Te Deum as we viewed the statue from the balcony. In peaceful times it is illuminated with electric lights. It is visible many miles out at sea.

A number of the sightseeing people could not get all the way up the



CHINESE BOYS AND GIRLS—STREET VENDORS



A GIGANTIC JUNK ON THE
YANGTZE RIVER



THE YANGTZE RIVER STEAMER

mountain. Some became dizzy, others became deaf, while some had nose-bleeds because of the high altitude. With all my heart trouble I could go to the base and join in with the majority. This trip took in the greater part of the day. Miss Lacombe then took us to dinner at her home. When we stood in their back yard Christ looked down on us from his heavenly height. His extended arms made us feel that He was protecting us and watching over us. Finally the clouds gathered around Him and He was no longer visible. There was still much to be seen of this wonderful city with its tall palm trees and beautiful flowers. Sugar Loaf Mountain looked inviting but time would not permit us to visit it. Already the boat whistle was shrieking, calling its passengers to hustle or they would be left behind. Before embarking we were loaded down with coffee and cakes. "Souvenirs of Rio" the men called it who handed out the packages.

Some good Father held me up and told me to give my sick Sister a box of cakes and a bag of coffee. He also handed me five dollars, saying it was for her. I could not understand why he picked me out from that large crowd of Sisters. When I got on board the boat Sister Jerome Marie said she had a Father visitor and a Girl Scout. She had to tell him what I looked like. Her description was a good one for he made no mistake. We are always known by our white beard as it was called. We were happy as we cabled Mother telling her we would arrive home before the airmail. I hardly had my feet on the boat when the gangplank came up and we were on our way. They did not wait for anyone this time. It was discovered that eight of the crew and one passenger remained in Brazil. Their passports were not called for. Too bad, for the government will run them down and they will be punished. They were all Americans.

We were on the home stretch. American sailors lingered on the pier as the big vessel nosed its way out into the water. On board ship we sang all the patriotic songs we knew. The large, green Brazilian flag with its southern cross waved gently in the breeze. The people remained till they looked like dots still waving their hankies as a last farewell. We watched the beautiful sunset as it played about the statue of Christ the Redeemer. The fast approaching shades of night cut off our view and we went indoors to answer the sound of the bugle calling us to evening dinner. That night when we gathered to sing the Ave Maris Stella we noticed our number increased. Protestants of all denominations joined us. They were greatly impressed. Surely the Christ of the Mountains awakened their hearts. Catholics who neglected their religion asked to be further instructed that they might attend their duties; even some of the Protestants asked about things concerning our religion. We felt the trip was not in vain for we could see much good coming from it.

We knew that if the weather were favorable it would take another two weeks. They would pass quickly for there were many cues that would demand our time. Ration cards were given out. Baggage seals and stamps were provided early so as to be ready. More papers had to be signed. Father Lenehan gave a concert in Sister's cabin. All the Sisters were entertained the following Sunday in C Dining Room. Father Ryan was at the piano and Father Lenehan played the violin. One thing after the other helped the days to go quickly.

With the arrival of Thanksgiving a big program was prepared. It was opened with the singing of "My Country 'Tis of Thee." Father Floribert gave the opening prayer after which we sang the "Star-Spangled Banner." A short speech was given by a minister, followed by the prayer for Civil Authorities prayed by Father Comber. A special chorus rendered "America the Beautiful," closing the ceremonies with a collection for the Red Cross. There were no sneers on the faces of the onlookers for this program was very solemn and beautiful.

We were nearing the end of our journey. Elsa told us there were more

days of rough sea ahead of us. She also told us several of the crew became unbalanced. Elsa said if we knew what the crew knows we would have passengers unbalanced also. Thank God we were not wholly aware of the danger we were in.

November 28th, Sister Corita saw the bodies of two whales following our boat. She saw the little fountain of water they spurt up into the air. That night at 7:15 a hushed silence came over everyone. Planes were flying so low that above the noise of the engines the motors of the plane could be heard. They had no lights so everyone suspected them to be enemy planes. Nothing happened and we breathed more freely when we no longer heard the whirr of their motors.

November 29th. The Swedish Purser was married to one of the passengers. She was a Canadian. Happiness floated in the air as they sang the songs of long ago. This was the second wedding we had enroute. That same night we approached Cape Hatteras. It felt and sounded as if the boat were being torn apart. It cracked and creaked all night long. At times it seemed we were standing on our heads. We had one more opportunity to feed the fishes. We were seasick and just three days out from our destination. The lights in our "alley" were blown out. It was so dark we could hardly dress. Sister Dolorita had to wear her mantle to church, she could not find her gray cape. When the lights were once more turned on she found her cape wrapped around the feet of the sleeping Sister Camilla.

November 30th the water was rougher than rough. A cold, biting wind was blowing and the rain was pouring down. We knew we were ahead of schedule so everyone was busy stretching necks to see land. About 7:00 p.m. the Ambrose Lights put in an appearance. In the distance could be seen the lights of New Jersey. What a thrill to know that the land before us was our own native soil. The people yelled and cheered. All without exception raced from one side of the boat to the other to see what could be seen. A big dirigible was circling above us. It came so low we could have touched it from the deck. A small boat brought the pilot out to us. Surely he never received such a cheering in all his days. Other tugs were sailing back and forth giving us a hearty welcome. No one thought of retiring that night. We were informed that the boat would remain outside the harbor for the night; early morning we would dock at the Swedish pier in New Jersey. At 11:30 p.m. the Federal doctors came on board and awakened Sister Jerome Marie out of a sound sleep. They wanted to send her to the Federal Hospital in New York. After hearing she was going to St. Vincent's they arranged to take Father Boule, Dr. Collins and Father Spawn there also.

With the dawn of December 1, 1943, the decks were filled with people. The deck steward said we anchored outside of Brooklyn. We could hardly wait for the vessel to move. Eight-thirty a. m. the anchor was pulled up. We were moving slowly. Noses were rubbing the windows clean trying to get a view of the land. While passing the Statue of Liberty, at 9:15 a.m., our shift was in the dining room having breakfast. The waiters had compassion on us and opened all the portholes so we could get a good view of the statue. Everyone was on that side of the boat. Those on deck were singing every patriotic song they knew. The air was ringing with their voices. When we returned to the table the milk from our cereal had run all over the tablecloth. The boat was tipped over so far. Breakfast was a hurried affair. We wanted to be on deck when we landed.

Before docking, about a hundred men dressed in uniform, boarded the boat. These were the F.B.I. men who were to have a private interview with each passenger before being dismissed from the boat. There were also American policemen with them. They would be needed for we were told there were some court cases. All the drawing rooms were locked. The investigation was held in these rooms. We received our final report on temperatures to

know whether or not we passed quarantine. I had to stay close to Sister Jerome Marie's cabin because Dr. Kenny arranged to have me on the preferred list. The stretcher cases were the first to disembark. Government officials from the Passport Division came on board. Once more we were fingerprinted; our passports were taken from us after a thorough examination to see if we corresponded with the picture on the passport. Sister Rose Benigna offered to take our baggage slips since we could not wait for the distribution of valises. She later told us she passed customs without having a single bag opened. The customs officer was very kind; he licked the stamps and quickly pasted them on.

Before we knew it we were going down the gangplank. Cameras were flashing trying their level best to get a picture of Sister on the stretcher. We were put into the first ambulance. The passport authorities failed to give us the pink Navy slips. This detained us for over an hour, holding up all the other ambulances behind us. The officers insisted that I be examined. They wanted us to return to the boat. It was useless to try. After we were once off we could not get back on. Then came the health officials with more trouble ahead. After much fussing about who the patient was, Dr. Kenny had to be called to settle the affair. He assured them I was only acting as a companion for Sister and she was the patient. They had papers stating just the opposite. They finally agreed to let us go but we were still minus the pink slip and we could not get off the pier without it. Our driver, a girl, went back for it. She said she never had to fight with the Navy so hard before but she won her point, she had the slips.

In our excitement we forgot to say goodbye to friends who became very intimate in our ten and a half weeks of travel. To tell the truth there was little time for farewells. Perhaps it is all for the best. These same people may never cross our paths again. It was good to know them all.

Before we left the pier a man brought a letter to us bearing the names of Sister Marie Bernard and Sister Mary Karen. He said he would inform them we were on our way to St. Vincent's and they could meet us there. Permission was not given to meet anyone on the pier. They arrived at the hospital almost as quickly as we did. We were so happy to see someone dressed as we were but to know them made it even more pleasant. They spent themselves untiringly to make us happy and comfortable. They are two dear little Sisters. We are proud of them.

A good little old Sister at the hospital told us some were detained on the boat for the night. We later learned Sister Mary Luke was one. The State Department had her name mixed with her sister's name who is still in the Philippines. Sister Luke had this trouble in India. The State Department had her sister's passport and not her own. Many of the Sisters did not get off until 10:30 that night. It was also stated thirty were sent to Ellis Island but no names were given.

The Sisters at the hospital were lovely. Sister Jerome Marie was well cared for in the hospital and I was given a room in the Sisters' Infirmary on the fifth floor. I had a big room, a private bath and a good bed. I did not sleep the first night. I felt as if I were jumping all over the bed. They gave Sister Jerome Marie something to quiet her nerves so she had a good night. Our Sisters visited us every day while we were in New York. Since I was able to go about they showed me a little of the town. Those of you who know New

York know that the big tall buildings are all resting on the underground subway. Surely the whole of the city must be dug out for these trains. It is a wonder the weight of the buildings does not cause cave-ins. Having been to New York before I knew my way fairly well. Sister Marie Bernard took me out to Maryknoll. Here we saw our old ship companions once more. It was a good chance to say a decent farewell this time. Maryknoll is very pretty. Many of the returning Sisters had never seen it before. The chapel is very large. Stalls along the wall take the place of pews thereby giving them a nice wide aisle. The architecture is modern throughout. The altar is gorgeous in an immense big sanctuary. It was First Friday and postulants were keeping adoration. They received 45 postulants October 15th. They have only one reception day a year. Out of this group not more than three return to the world. All about the convent is an air of the Orient. Pagoda shaped shrines, chairs and other furniture reminded me of China. It gave me a deep longing for the land of the Yellow Race. I liked it very much. Because of the war and the many evacuations in the Far East there are more than 300 Sisters at the Motherhouse. These Sisters are now opening missions in South America.

Fordham was another place to be seen. This is the college which our two Sisters are attending. Part of the college has been opened to the Army. The campus is quite large. There are many pretty buildings here. Time did not permit a thorough inspection but I O.K.'d it and this pleased the Sisters. I also visited the home where they are rooming. Each has a nice room. Many Sisters board at this place so they also have companionship.

Sister Pauline's sister, Mrs. Benziger, visited us. She thought Sister Pauline was with us. We were sorry to see her disappointed but she very kindly said, "Seeing us was just like seeing her own dear sister."

Irene West paid us a visit. She was very interesting telling us all about the war and defense work. We enjoyed every moment with her. She called a second time on Sunday just as we were ready to leave for the depot. We appreciated her kind thoughtfulness.

It is surprising how one loses all sense of time. Father Cornelius and Company arranged to leave on Saturday. We could not go with them because the Doctor would not dismiss Sister from the hospital. Friday he gave us the dismissal: immediately we called Mr. Mulholland who reserved tickets for us. We could not get away before Sunday. All trains were filled up with soldier boys and service women who had the preference.

Sunday came in a hurry. Our two Sisters called to escort us to the depot. One more run to the chapel and off we were to the waiting cab. Bag and baggage were packed in with us. In a few minutes we were at the depot where a wheel chair was waiting to take Sister Jerome Marie to the train. The Negro porter seemed to enjoy wheeling his patient as he smilingly took us through the crowds and up the elevator. Sisters M. Bernard and M. Karen came into our compartment to see if it would pass their inspection. There was little time left when the porter call "All Aboard" and our train was slowly moving out of the station, Cincinnati bound and our last lap for home. It was exactly 4:45 p.m., New York time. We took time out to inspect our roomette. It was grand. Something I never dreamed of seeing in the line of travel. I could hardly believe my eyes as I thought of the inconvenient way of traveling in the land I just came from.

Homeward Bound

We were both dead tired and decided to retire early. We slept most of the way home. Train rocking no more bothered us after all that ocean voyage. We are good now on land or on sea. Our train arrived on time: exactly 7:22 a.m. The weather was not so friendly. It was the first rain we met at any port. The weather doesn't count for a thing when one knows that in a few minutes one will be seeing dear ones one hasn't seen for years. The meeting at the depot cannot be described. The first one I saw was Mother; she immediately went to Sister Jerome Marie who was in a wheel chair. If I were expected to name all the Sisters who welcomed us I could not do so. I was so bewildered I only remember there were many of them. I know, too, something inside was weeping, for we truly did not expect such a meeting.

Mother permitted us to stay with them for more than an hour. It gave us a chance to relieve them of their worries about us.

I shall never forget that morning. Our good, dear Mother so concerned about us had Martin to stop at St. Joseph's to get a cup of hot chocolate and cookies. We weren't hungry; only happy; too happy for words, to be home again. The distance from Cincinnati to Oldenburg was so short. With Mother, Sister Cupertina and Sister La Salette we had much to talk about. Each turn of the wheel was taking us closer to our dear old convent home. Sister Cupertina gave me a poke in the ribs and pointed to something outside the window. It was a picture I shall always love—the spires of our Convent and the Chapels. Before the wink of an eye we were in the kitchen court. Where all the Sisters came from at that particular moment is beyond me. The courtyard was filled: there wasn't an empty window in the building. All were waving a glad welcome home. We were kept busy answering questions for all who could walk were in the basement to meet us. Since I could walk about, Mother took me by the hand and walked me all over the first floor, showing me the improvements and telling me of more to come. Oh, it was a grand and glorious feeling to be home among my own once more.

The kindness of all the Sisters showed clearly the loyalty of our Congregation to its members. Truly we are blessed. God is so good to us to shelter us and to give others to us who will always be kind to us. I could only think of the many people who traveled with us, who had no place to go and no one to meet them.

Father Romuald, too, gave us a hearty welcome. It was he who suggested we have a Thanksgiving service for our safe return. December 8th was the day set for the ceremonies. A lovely sermon was delivered by our loyal Chaplain and a blessing given to the two of us. Our Chapel thundered with the voices of the girls and Sisters as they sang "The Star-Spangled Banner." Short and beautiful were these exercises, but always to be remembered.

I can truly say, and I want everyone to know it, I am proud to be a religious and more than proud to belong to the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Indiana, U.S.A.

Dear Friends:
May the contents of this book
inspire a fervent prayer
for our remaining four Sisters in
Struggling China.

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